The Westminster Senior-Intermediate Quarterly

Fourth Quarter · 1918

HEAD OF THE EGYPTIAN SPHINX

PREPARED BY REV. HAROLD McA. ROBINSON

· John T. Faris D.D. Editor ·

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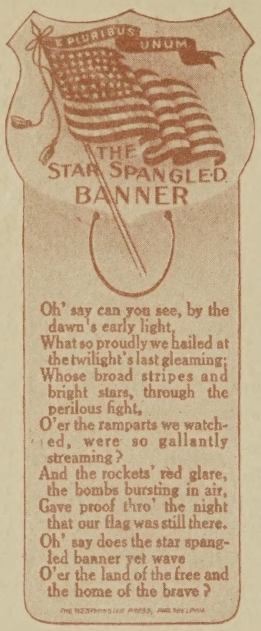

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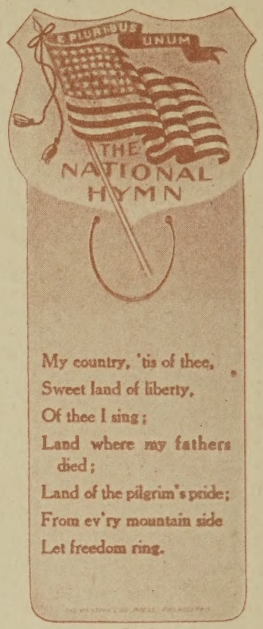

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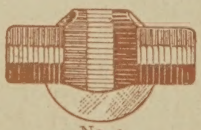

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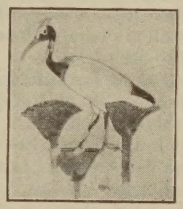
FAMILIAR PEOPLE

My Dear Fellow Students:

How would you like to live for a while in the ancient East? How would you like to see something of Mesopotamia and Canaan and Egypt almost four thousand years ago? How would you like to travel by camel caravan or watch a flock of the thick-tailed oriental sheep, or camp in the Vale of Hebron, or pay a visit to the land of the pyramids and the Sphinx and the wonderful Nile? How would you like to make such a trip in the company of Abraham and Sarah and their nephew Lot, or to live a while with Isaac and Rebekah and their twin sons Jacob and Esau, or with Jacob and Rachel and their twelve sons, or to follow the career of the Hebrew slave boy who became Grand Vizier of Egypt? That is what you are invited to do this quarter.

What familiar people we have for company! Who does not know something about these people from Abraham to Joseph? Why is it that everyone knows something about these people who lived so very long ago? It is because these people alone in all the ancient world knew the living and true God. The knowledge we have of the living and true God came down to us from them. Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was promised to them, and was born among their descendants. We can come to know the living and true God in the company of these ancient people who knew him.



We will find these people still more familiar than we thought. They are familiar to us in the Bible. But if we will look closely we will find that they are still more familiar to us in another place. We will find that they are living to-day right in our own hearts. We will find that the good and bad of these people lives on in us. There is not an ungrateful, greedy, envious, crafty, mean, wicked unbelieving thing in them which is not the same in us. There is not a thing which they suffered for their wickedness which we will be spared if we sin with them. There is not a good and noble, a straight and clean, a God-fearing and God-believing thing in them which we may not have in us. As we learn to hate and fear the mean things in them, let us take care to hate and fear the mean things in ourselves. As we learn to wonder at the faith in God they had, let us pray that God will give us that same faith. For the life of faith in God is the best and happiest life.

Dr. Louis Burton Crane, whom you know so well, has written the comment on the First Lesson. The rest have been written by

Your sincere friend,

Amos R. Wells

The black granite sphinx head shown on the cover, long called the Hyksos sphinx, was found with others by Mariette at Tanis. The theory has been proposed that this sphinx represents Amenemhat III of the twelfth dynasty, since it strongly resembles a statue of this king at Petrograd.

ABRAM LEAVING HOME

The Golden Text—"Thou shalt be a blessing."—Gen. 12 : 2.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 12 : 1-9

COMMON VERSION

1 Now the LORD had said unto A'bram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So A'bram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and A'bram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Ha'ran.

5 And A'bram took Sa'rai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Ha'ran; and they went forth to go into the land of Ca'naan; and into the land of Ca'naan they came.

6 ¶ And A'bram passed through the land unto the place of Si'chem, unto the plain of Mo'reh. And the Ca'naan-ite *was* then in the land.

7 And the LORD appeared unto A'bram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth'el, and pitched his tent, *having* Beth'el on the west, and Ha'i on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

9 And A'bram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE[1]

1 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 4 So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. 6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 7 And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him. 8 And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Ai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah. 9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Additional Passages for Study: Mark 10 : 42-45; Acts 13 : 1-4; 26 : 15-19.

The Places—Haran, Canaan.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, September 30	Abram Leaving Home	Gen. 12 : 1-9.
Tuesday, October 1	God's Covenant with Abram	Gen. 17 : 1-8.
Wednesday, October 2	God Keeps His Covenant	Acts 7 : 1-8.
Thursday, October 3	Fruits of Obedient Faith	Heb. 11 : 1-10.
Friday, October 4	True Greatness Through Service	Mark 10 : 35-45.
Saturday, October 5	Ministers Called to Service	Acts 13 : 1-13.
Sunday, October 6	The Blessing of Heeding the Call	Isa. 41 : 8-16.

THE FRIEND OF GOD

We begin in this lesson the study of the great Hebrew patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. We shall examine the chief events of their lives and decide what made them great. Abraham is the first. Why has his name come down in history? He alone almost, of all his time, has had an abiding influence upon the thought of men. He was not a great conqueror, beating down opposition and establishing his rule over other peoples; he was not a builder of cities or an organizer of the energies of men; he was not a lawgiver or a historian. He was a simple shepherd, living with his flocks and herds in the wide, open spaces, surrounded by his own family and his retainers of like occupation. Yet Abraham has a large place in history. There must be an adequate reason for his prominence, for in this world men do not rise to great prominence

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and achieve enduring fame without cause. Here is the reason in brief. Abram, or Abraham, as he was called later, was from the beginning of his life to its close, a believer in one God. He was a man of faith in an age when faith was rare. Having faith, he had the courage to live by it. God recognized his faith by appealing to it, and God never asked anything of Abraham which he was unwilling to undertake. What God asked of him and how he responded we are to study in this and succeeding lessons.

THE HOME HE LEFT AT GOD'S COMMAND

Abram lived with his father, Terah, in Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was a great city which the researches of the archæologists show to have been far advanced in civilization at the time when Abram was born. It was situated, if these scholars are right in their conclusions, on the Euphrates River not far from the Persian Gulf. Now it is a heap of ruins, but the character of those ruins show what great buildings existed in early times. We know something of the life which was lived there. It must have been a very busy place. Probably the boy Abram saw the caravans arriving from all parts of the known world, bringing the wealth of other parts into Ur. It was also a center of intellectual life where the great scholars of the world, especially the astronomers, met and sought the truth. Yet Ur was a wicked city. It was the center of the worship of the moon god and a magnificent temple was dedicated to that worship. Men had not yet learned that religion, to be true, must make people good, and, though they were very religious, they were very wicked. Even their worship was carried on by means of most impure rites.

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UR OF THE CHALDEES

This mound covers the remains of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham.

In this atmosphere of progress and yet of wickedness, Abram was born. His family were descendants of Shem, while these idolatrous people were of the family of Ham. Abram's family were therefore aliens in a strange land. We do not know what brought them there, but, since they were shepherds, it is probable that they had come because it was a fertile land, where rich pasturage might be had.

THE MIGRATION

In this city, or in its immediate neighborhood, Abram heard the call of God. He heard it because he had been faithful to God in the land of wickedness. He alone of all his people seems to have preserved the ancient purity of God's worship, and to have kept his faith. His father Terah was apparently corrupted by the evil associations of Ur. Traditions have come down to us telling how Abram resisted the temptations to idolatry, breaking the idols to pieces and braving the wrath of the monarch. These stories, whether true or not, surely give us the spirit of the man. Astronomers can calculate the orbit of a planet from a very small arc. Likewise you can tell something of the previous life of a man from the trend of his present life. God's calls come to men who are ready to hear them.

God called Abram to leave his country and his family and to go out to an unknown future. He promised him land in plenty, and the headship of a great new people. In this hope Abram set out. He took with him his wife, Sarai, his father, Terah, and his nephew, Lot. They set out for Canaan at God's command, but they did not reach it in the first stage of their journey. They passed up the rich valley of the Euphrates as far as Haran and there halted. Maybe the thought of turning west across the desert sands was too much for Terah, who had not the firm faith of Abram. Maybe the old man was too infirm for farther travel. At any rate Abraham settled down in Haran and remained there until the death of his father.

Then he made a second start. A new revelation of God came to him, reminding him that he had so far only obeyed in part the previous command. This time he did not hesitate. Together with Lot he gathered his company with their wives and slaves, and their flocks and herds, a great caravan, and struck off boldly across the desert. A traveled highway led from Mesopotamia through Damascus and the land of Canaan to Egypt, and it was over this that the company probably journeyed. The hardships of the way are passed over in the narra-

tive, but they must have been great. There is something impressive about the laconic phrase of the story, "into the land of Canaan they came." Gen. 12 : 5. It reflects the faith and heroism of the man who made this journey, depending wholly on God.

ABRAM THE PIONEER

From place to place the caravan moved. First to Shechem, then to the east of Bethel, and then, still looking for a suitable home, they moved on southward. It was not Abram's lot just then to find a congenial location for a permanent home. God was still proving his faith. But how well Abram responded to the tests of God is shown by the fact, twice mentioned in our lesson, that wherever he went he set up an altar unto Jehovah. Abram found it necessary to have an altar for the worship of God, no matter how short was his stay in a place. And after his departure these altars of worship of the true God remained, a testimony to others who might come, to the faith of Abram in Jehovah.

"The Canaanite was then in the land." So the narrative expresses briefly the evil environment into which Abram came. It was not possible then, as it is not possible now, to escape from evil influences simply by moving. The Canaanites were idolatrous and wicked people, and their presence was a constant menace to the purity of the life and worship of God's people. The only safety for anyone in this world lies in living close to God. Abram seems to have understood this, for his altars, erected in every one of his temporary homes, testify to his desire for communion with God. It is a good thing to withdraw from contact with evil men so far as possible, but we must always realize that the only effectual method of escaping the contagion of sin is to establish a degree of spiritual health capable of resistance to temptation. The nearer we live to God, the surer will be our immunity to the infection of sin.

THE PROMISED BLESSING

When Abram left Ur of the Chaldees God promised to show him a new land. Acts 7 : 3. Later in Haran, God promised that in the new land Abram should become the head of a great nation, and that he should become a blessing to all the families of the earth. What a wonderful promise! Now, after Abram had obeyed God and had removed to the new land, God appeared to him again and confirmed the former promise, thus approving what Abram had done and assuring him that now he was in the place where he might expect the continued favor of God. Obedience to God's commands will bring us all into this happy condition.

WHAT WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON

1. What makes men great is not their wealth, or their learning, or their popularity, or their high position, but their faith. God created this world; it is now as always his exclusive possession. His wise and loving purposes for its inhabitants will be carried out. The greatest man is the man whose life is aligned with the will of God.

2. "Evil companionships corrupt good morals." No matter how pleasant and comfortable our situation, if it is morally unsafe, we should count that fact as God's call to leave it. Ur of the Chaldees was doubtless a progressive city and a luxurious home, but no man living there could have been a servant of God and a blessing to the world.

3. Yet note that Abram did not escape temptation by going away into the new country. Even Jesus was tempted, not in the city but in the wilderness. Environment is not temptation, although it may minister to temptation. "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed." We must keep our hearts right with God to be safe even in the cleanest environment.

4. Obedience is the surest sign of faith. Abram went out at God's command, "not knowing whither he went." He sailed with sealed orders. One step at a time is frequently the extent of our illumination. But that step is bright. To demand more is not faith, but doubt. The promise is conditioned upon obedience. "Go—and I will bless thee."

5. God blesses us most effectually when he makes us a blessing to others. The happiest person is he who makes others happy.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Thy country . . . thy kindred. The family of Abram had lived long enough in Ur to call it home. **The land that I will show thee.** The exact destination was unknown to Abram.

2. I will make of thee. Note the fourfold blessing; the increase of his people, material prosperity, personal honor, and the means of blessing to others.

4. So Abram went. The brief notice indicates his implicit obedience. **Seventy and five years old.** His age is mentioned because of the historical importance of the migration.

5. The souls. This refers to the slaves whom they had acquired in Haran.

6. The place of Shechem. That is, the place where Shechem afterwards stood. **The oak of Moreh.** Or "terebinth" (margin). An aged oak, twenty-six feet in circumference, called Abraham's oak was standing a few years ago, not far from Hebron. **The Canaanite was then in the land.** The land was inhabited. It required faith to believe that this was the land which Jehovah had promised him.

7. Jehovah appeared. Assuring Abram that he had so far done well. **Builded he an altar.** A place of worship and a pledge of loyalty.

8. Removed . . . and pitched his tent. Showing the temporary character of his home. He was yet seeking a permanent settlement.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Tell what you know of the city of Ur, its state of civilization, its religion, its morals.
2. Why do you think Abram remained so long at Haran, when he had started for Canaan?
3. Did Abram escape altogether from temptation when he left the wicked city?
4. What made Abram the greatest man of his time, and one of the greatest of all time?
5. How is the best way to show our faith in God?
6. There are four parts to the blessing promised to Abram; which seems to you the most attractive?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 56. What special statement of God's will is given us in the Old Testament?

A. The special statement of God's will given us in the Old Testament is the Ten Commandments. Ex. 20 : 1-17.

Q. 57. What are the Ten Commandments?

A. The Ten Commandments are:

I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

(The answer to Question 57 will be continued in the next lesson.)

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Look up "Ur of the Chaldees" in any encyclopedia of general history, or in Rawlinson's "Ancient History" (Book I, Chaldea).
2. What was Abram called to give up?
3. What are the four parts of the promise to Abram? Vs. 2, 3.
4. What makes Abram's faith especially admirable?
5. How did he show his colors in the new land?
6. What trait of Abram contributed most to his greatness?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 96. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Lesson II—ABRAM HELPING LOT

The Golden Text—"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."—Prov. 17 : 17.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 13:5-11; 14:14-16

COMMON VERSION

13 : 5 ¶ And Lot also, which went with A'bram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of A'bram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Ca'naan-ite and the Per'iz-zite dwelled then in the land.

8 And A'bram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren.

9 *Is* not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jor'dan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sod'om and Go-mor'rah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of E'gypt, as thou comest unto Zo'ar.

AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE[1]

13 : 5 And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. 6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. 8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou take* the right hand, then I will go to the left. 10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, as thou goest

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THE CITY OF HEBRON

Hebron, where Abram lived for some time. Gen. 13: 18.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jor'dan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

* * * * *

14:14 And when A'bram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants,* born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan.

15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Ho'bah, which *is* on the left hand of Da-mas'cus.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

unto Zoar. 11 So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

* * * * *

14 : 14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan. 15 And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. 16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

Additional Passages for Study: Mark 7 : 9-13; I Tim. 5 : 3-8; I John 3 : 17, 18.

The Places—Near Bethel and Hebron.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, October 7	Abram Helping Lot	Gen. 13 : 5-11; 14 : 14-16.
Tuesday, October 8	Abram Rewarded for Help	Gen. 13 : 12-18.
Wednesday, October 9	The Need of Others Revealed	Gen. 18 : 16-23.
Thursday, October 10	Abram Praying for Others	Gen. 18 : 23-33.
Friday, October 11	Serving Others	Rom. 12 : 9-21.
Saturday, October 12	Devotion to Parents	Matt. 15 : 1-9.
Sunday, October 13	Providing for the Home	I Tim. 5 : 1-8.

THE CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE

Abram and his dead brother's son, Lot, who had migrated with him, had both become great proprietors. Their property consisted chiefly in flocks of sheep, herds of cattle and camels, and hundreds of dependent people. Abram was the chief, or patriarch, or what we should call to-day in the language of the Arabs, the sheik, of the tribe, or clan. Lot was a sort of lesser sheik, with his own flocks, herds, and family of dependents, but under the protection of Abram. They lived a nomadic life. They moved in a leisurely way from place to place, in a great caravan, and, when they found good grazing ground for their large flocks and herds, set up camp by pitching a sort of village of tents. They had just now come up from Egypt where they had gone on account of a food shortage in Canaan, and were again camped between Bethel and Ai. Their flocks and herds had grown so large that there was not pasturage enough in the vicinity for both establish-

ments. Trouble broke out first among the herdsmen. Both Abram's and Lot's herdsmen were anxious to get the best grazing ground for their flocks and herds, and perhaps there was difficulty about wells, too, and they quarreled. There was sure to be more trouble ahead among the herdsmen, and if Abram and Lot took sides with their herdsmen, there was more than a chance of a family quarrel.

ABRAM'S GENEROUS OFFER

But Abram could not bear to think of a family quarrel. He decided to talk the matter over with Lot in a friendly way. It was not a pleasant thing to talk about, but it is always better to talk over misunderstandings between friends before they get so bad that it is very hard to talk them over without making the matter worse. Abram told Lot that, in his opinion, there would only be more trouble between their herdsmen if they went on camping together, and that he was afraid that, sooner or later, there would be hard feelings between them. The best thing to do was for them to separate while there was still good feeling. Then Abram, who was the older man and had superior rights as head of the family, made a remarkable proposal. He proposed that his nephew should choose any part of the country he liked and lead his caravan there, and said that he, Abram, would be satisfied to go in another direction. That was generous. Generosity very often consists in not standing on our rights, but in giving them up, even though they are our rights, for the good of others. But Abram showed more than his generosity in giving Lot his choice: he showed his faith in God. God had promised him a land to live in, Gen. 12 : 1, and Abram trusted God to give him that land, no matter where Lot chose to live. There are times when the friends of God are called upon to make what look like sacrifices in order to do right, but anyone who will do right, and trust in God, will sooner or later find that the blessings which God promises are sure.

LOT'S SELFISH CHOICE

Abram made this generous proposal to Lot as they were standing on a high ridge which commanded a view of the country far and wide. By far the finest view was to the east. In the distance were the dark mountains of Moab. At the foot of the mountains, the Jordan River wound its way through a long and deep ravine—its course marked by a tract of forest—a "ravine rich with vine, olive, and fig." Lot looked at this wonderful country, and remembered what he had heard about it. Dean Stanley says: "He [Lot] saw not, indeed, the tropical fertility and copious streams along its course. But he knew of its fame, as of the garden of Eden, as of the valley of the Nile; no crust of salt, no volcanic convulsions had yet blasted its verdure, or touched the secure civilization of the early Phœnician settlements which had struck roots within its deep abyss." Lot saw that the country to the east was by far the best, and he said to his uncle, "I will take all this." Lot forgot many things when he made that choice. He forgot the gratitude he owed to his uncle for years of affection and care. He forgot that he owed all his present prosperity to Abram. He was blinded by his greed. Even if it was ungrateful, he wanted the best for himself. Such ingratitude is one of the commonest and most hateful of sins. Again, Lot's greed blinded him to another thing. He forgot that if he went down into that country and took his family with him, he would expose them to the very worst influences. Sodom was in that country. "Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah." But it was a beautiful country, and Lot thought that he would be prosperous there. He forgot that there is much more in life than just having a great deal of money. He thought that he would choose the riches, and run the risks. It was the beginning of Lot's downfall and the ruin of his family. He was never really happy again. There was very much sorrow and misery and death ahead for Lot and all who were dependent on him. It is always so when one chooses to seek wealth and position at the expense of doing right and trusting God.

THE RAID OF THE EASTERN KINGS

There were five cities in the southern end of the Jordan valley whose kings were tributary to Chedorlaomer, King of Elam. They rebelled against their overlord. Chedorlaomer organized a punitive expedition, in which he was joined by other eastern kings who were his allies. They swept up the Euphrates valley and down by way of Damascus on the rebels. The kings of the five cities met the raiders in the Vale of Siddim, and were defeated. Chedorlaomer and his allies plundered Sodom and Gomorrah, gathered up Lot and his family and his flocks and herds, and made off homeward.

ABRAM'S GENEROUS RESCUE OF LOT

In the meantime, Abram had trekked south from Bethel, and established himself for the present near Hebron in a grove of oaks, or terebinths, which belonged to an Amorite chieftain named Mamre. Abram had formed a sort of alliance with Mamre and his two brothers, who were also chieftains. A breathless fugitive from the rout of the five kings ran into Abram's camp with the news about Lot. If Abram had not been a generous man, it is easy to see how he might have taken the news of the disaster to Lot. There are a good many people who would have said under these circumstances: "It serves him right. Lot was ungrateful to me. He chose the best land, and this has come to him as a punishment. I cannot feel very sorry for him. He made his own bed, let him lie in it." But not Abram. He held no grudge. He forgot Lot's ingratitude. He remembered only that Lot was his nephew, and that he was in trouble. Abram had the spirit of a Christian. He showed the spirit which Christ commanded when he said, "Love your ene-

mies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Abram no sooner got the word of Lot's distress than he sounded the call for his fighting men. We get some idea of the size of his following when we hear that there were no less than three hundred and eighteen men, trained to fight, who had been born in families attached to Abram's company. The friendly Amorite chieftains joined him. They followed the track of the raiders, overtaking them far to the north, at Dan. Abram made a surprise attack on them at night, dividing his forces so as to come at their camp from different quarters. He routed them, and pursued them as far as a little town just north of Damascus. Then he turned back, and brought Lot and his womenfolks and his goods and all his dependents safely back home.

What a fine, warm feeling Abram must have had in his heart when he thought that he had not held a grudge, but had kept on being generous to the end! Sometimes it is hard to bring ourselves to the point of forgetting injuries, and doing good to those who have wronged us. But the finest moments of life are those in which good deeds, like this of Abram's, bring their own reward.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

6. And the land was not able to bear them. There was not enough pasturage for both their herds.

7. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. "Canaanite" was a name given at first to the people of the coastal plains of Palestine, afterwards to the inhabitants of Palestine in general. The Perizzites were probably of a different race from the Canaanites and were in the land before them. These peoples also got their living from the land.

8. For we are brethren. Abram was Lot's uncle, but they were in brotherly relations with each other. Compare Gen. 14 : 14-16.

10. The Plain of the Jordan. Literally, the "Circle" of the Jordan, the valley of the Jordan River. **Sodom and Gomorrah.** Cities in the southern end of the Jordan Valley, afterwards destroyed for their wickedness. Ch. 19 : 1-29. **The garden of Jehovah.** The garden of Eden, which Jehovah planted. **Like the land of Egypt.** Famous for its fertility caused by the annual overflow of the Nile. **As thou goest unto Zoar.** Egypt lay beyond Zoar, in the direction of Zoar, which was a city at the southern end of the Dead Sea.

Ch. 14:14. Trained men, born in his house. Servants of Abram, born of servants in Abram's family, who had been trained to fight. **As far as Dan.** A town in the extreme north of Palestine.

15. Divided himself. Divided his forces into companies. **On the left hand of Damascus.** North of Damascus.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Locate Hebron, Elam, and Damascus on the map.
2. Describe the way in which Abram and Lot lived, and how the quarrel between their herdsmen grew out of their way of living.
3. What is the best way of keeping misunderstandings between friends from going too far?
4. Do we ever have to make choices similar to Lot's? If we do, on what principles should we make our decision?
5. How did Abram show the spirit of Christ?

The Intermediate Catechism

Question 57 continued; Commandments III and IV.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

(The answer to Question 57 will be concluded in the next lesson.)

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

It is almost impossible to understand or to remember any history if you do not trace its progress on the map. Be able to locate all the places mentioned in the lesson.

1. Looking eastward from near Bethel what could Abram and Lot see? What could they see if they looked west? north? south?
2. What reason is there for thinking that Chedorlaomer and his allies came by way of Damascus? Why would they not travel due west from Elam?
3. What traits of character did Abram show in the proposal he made to Lot?
4. Why is such ingratitude as Lot showed so common?
5. What arguments could Lot use to justify his choice? Are they good arguments?
6. How could Abram have tried to justify himself for not going to Lot's rescue?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 97. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest coming unworthily they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

ABRAHAM GIVING ISAAC TO GOD

The Golden Text—"I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life."—I Sam. 1: 11.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 22: 1-14

COMMON VERSION

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt A'bra-ham, and said unto him, A'bra-ham: and he said, Behold, *here* I *am*.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* I'saac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Mo-ri'ah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 ¶ And A'bra-ham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and I'saac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day A'bra-ham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And A'bra-ham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6 And A'bra-ham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon I'saac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And I'saac spake unto A'bra-ham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And A'bra-ham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and A'bra-ham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound I'saac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And A'bra-ham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, A'bra-ham, A'bra-ham: and he said, Here *am* I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

13 And A'bra-ham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and A'bra-ham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14 And A'bra-ham called the name of that place Je-ho'vah-ji'reh: as it is said *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

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1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. 2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. 3 And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? 8 And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided.

Additional Passages for Study: I Sam. 1: 9-28; Matt. 10: 34-39; II Tim. 3: 14, 15.

The Places—Beer-sheba and Moriah.

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DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, October 14	Isaac Given to Abraham	Gen. 21 : 1-12.
Tuesday, October 15	Abraham Giving Isaac to God	Gen. 22 : 1-14.
Wednesday, October 16	God Blessing Abraham	Gen. 15 : 4-6; 22 : 15-19.
Thursday, October 17	Giving God Our Best	Matt. 10 : 37-42.
Friday, October 18	Hannah Prays for a Son	I Sam. 1 : 9-18.
Saturday, October 19	Hannah Giving Samuel to God	I Sam. 1 : 19-28.
Sunday, October 20	Taking Up Our Cross	Luke 14 : 25-35.

GOD HAD GIVEN ISAAC TO ABRAHAM

Many years have passed since the last lesson. During these years God had given Abraham and Sarai, who was now called Sarah, a son in their old age. This was not just in the sense in which all children are the gift of God to their fathers and mothers, but in a very special sense. Isaac was given to Abraham and Sarah in their very old age when they could no longer have hoped to have any children. He was given to them especially as the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise that Abraham should be the father of a great nation in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

Abraham loved his son as all good men love their sons, but he loved him more intensely because he was the son of his old age, and the gift of God to him. He loved him not only as an aged father loves the only son of his old age, but as the one living hope of the fulfillment of God's promise that he should be the father of a great nation. Isaac was to him the living evidence that God's promises were sure.

THE TEST

Then one night the test came. God asked Abraham to give Isaac back to him. God distinctly said to Abraham, " 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac,' and give him back to me." What could that mean? It was not only that Abraham loved Isaac; but what would become of the promise if Isaac should die? How could Abraham ever become the father of a great nation in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed if Isaac were dead? Abraham did not know what it meant. He could not see how God could keep his promise if he did now what God distinctly told him to do. He could not see how God could keep his promise, but believed that somehow it was possible. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. 11: 18, 19, suggests that Abraham thought that perhaps God would raise Isaac from the dead.

The test was this: would Abraham trust God to fulfill his promise even if he could not see how it was possible? Would Abraham give back to God the son God had given him, the son he loved so much, from whom he hoped so much, and trust God? It was a test of faith. That is just what faith is, trusting God when we cannot see! Abraham could not see how God could fulfill his promise if Isaac were given back to God, but he could trust God. There will be many times when we cannot see the meaning of things we are called upon to suffer. It will seem to us that the promises of God do not hold good if we have to suffer so, or to deny ourselves so, or to do so many hard things. It is then that we will have to trust God as Abraham did, and, though we cannot see or understand, go on trusting God. After a while we shall see, just as Abraham did, and thank God for our sufferings and hard times.

THE CROWNING ACT OF FAITH

Abraham had trusted God all his life. He had trusted God when God had called him to leave his country and friends and go to a foreign land. He had trusted God when God had said that he would give him a son, even though Abraham did not see how that was possible. It is sublime to see how he trusted God now. We cannot tell how his heart was torn between love for his son and the hopes which were all bound up in the life of his son on the one hand, and obedience to God and trust in God on the other. We only know that the next morning early he made ready to obey the command of God which he could not understand.

God had told him to go into the mountainous district called "the land of Moriah." It is the district in which Jerusalem stands, and Mount Moriah is the hill on which the Temple afterwards stood with its altars of sacrifice. This district was, as they measured distances in those days, somewhat over two days' journey away to the northeast. Early in the morning, Abraham, without telling anyone what he had to do, split the wood for the fire with his own hands, summoned two of his young menservants to carry the wood, a vessel of smoldering coals, and, no doubt, some provisions for the journey. Then he called Isaac.

The third day out from home they came in sight of the mountain of which God had told him. Then Abraham told the young men to wait for them while they went to sacrifice. He would make the hardest part of the journey alone with Isaac. He did not see any way out, but he trusted God; perhaps in some way that he could not understand Isaac would come back with him after all. He said to the young men, "Abide ye here . . . we will worship, and come again to you." Then he told Isaac to carry the wood while he carried the vessel of smoldering coals and the sacrificial knife. And the aged father and his beloved son started off together. What would be the outcome of this terrible journey? God had told the father to give his son back to him!

For the first time in the narrative Isaac speaks.

No doubt he had often watched his father offering sacrifices. Now he noticed the wood, the fire, and the knife. But he did not see the lamb for the sacrifice. "Where is the lamb?" he asked. And his father, thinking ahead as best he could, answered, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son." So they went on together, the son trusting his father, though not understanding what his father meant, and the father trusting God, though not understanding what God meant.

They came to the place. Abraham built an altar. He laid the wood in order on the altar. He bound Isaac, his son, for the sacrifice. What strange foreboding had been in Isaac's mind all this time? It was so unusual — starting off so early in the morning. And his father had been so silent and distraught all the way. And there had been no lamb for the sacrifice. And his father had answered his question about the lamb so quietly and yet so finally. And now his father was binding him: so he was to be the sacrifice. Strange and awful: but Abraham was his father; he had shown his love for him in a thousand ways; there was no doubting his love; he knew best; Isaac trusted his father to the very last. Just as Abraham trusted the God who had shown his love for him in a thousand ways, he trusted him to the last; even to this strange and awful act of obedience.

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ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Abraham raised his knife to strike. But God would never, never have had him strike! The heathen all around offered their children as sacrifices to their gods. In after years the children of Israel imitated their heathen neighbors in this horrible practice. II Kings 16 : 3; Ps. 106 : 37ff.; Micah 6 : 6-8. But what God did now was to be forever a sign that such awful sacrifices are not acceptable to him. God wanted Abraham to feel to the depths of his heart that God had given him Isaac and to be resolved to the depths of his heart to give him back to God if God wanted him. An angel of Jehovah called to Abraham in the supreme moment: "Abraham, Abraham, do not touch the lad. God sees now that you would not withhold your son, your only son, from him." Abraham lifted his eyes in thankfulness, and saw a ram, caught by the horns in a thicket — that was to be the sacrifice. But no! The sacrifice was really in Abraham's heart. Abraham called the hill "Jehovah-jireh," "Jehovah will see," or "Jehovah will provide," because Jehovah provided a sacrifice instead of Isaac.

THE LESSON FOR US

The sacrifice was really in Abraham's heart. He was willing to give his beloved son back to God. He did give him back to God in his heart. He was willing to trust God to the end, even when he could not see or understand, even when his heart was torn with suffering, the love of a father called upon to sacrifice his son. The lesson is plain. It is the hardest and best lesson that life has to teach. It is twofold.

First, everything we are and everything we have

is the gift of God. Nothing is our own. We owe everything to God. To realize this and to be willing to give up everything for God is to be a Christian. "So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple," our Lord said. To be willing to renounce everything for Jesus' sake is to receive everything back again with the joy with which Abraham received Isaac back again from the dead. "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Second, it is the lesson of faith. Faith does not see, and it does not understand God's ways with us. Faith obeys and trusts God, and waits. Faith knows that God loves us; he has shown his love in ten thousand ways, and best of all, by offering up his only and well-beloved Son for us all; faith can never doubt the love of God for us. When faith comes to a hard place, it goes through the hard place, trusting God that his promises are sure, that it is all right, and that some time we shall see what God was doing and shall be satisfied.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

1. God did prove Abraham. Put Abraham to the test of faith. "Abram" means "exalted father." "Abraham" is probably a strengthened form of Abram, to heighten the idea of exaltation.

2. The land of Moriah. The district lying about the hill of the same name on which the Temple afterwards stood. **Burnt-offering.** An offering to be entirely consumed by fire, to express the entire dedication of the offerer to Jehovah.

14. Jehovah-jireh. "Jehovah will see," or "will provide."

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. What very important event in the life of Abraham had happened since the last lesson?
2. Why does a father love his son? What special reasons did Abraham have for loving Isaac?
3. Why did God ask Abraham to give Isaac back to him?
4. Would it have been easier for Abraham if he had waited a few days before carrying out God's command, instead of starting the next morning?
5. Describe the preparations Abraham made for his journey to the land of Moriah. What did Isaac think of them?
6. What reasons did Isaac have for trusting Abraham? Did Abraham have the same reasons for trusting God? Have we the same reasons?

The Intermediate Catechism

(Question 57 concluded. Commandments V-X.)

V. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thy shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Locate Beer-sheba and the land of Moriah on the map. Look up the history of Mount Moriah.
2. In what sense was Isaac Abraham's "only son"?
3. Had God a right to ask Abraham to give Isaac back to him? What rights has God in us?
4. How was Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac a crowning act of faith?
5. What was Isaac's attitude all through this experience? What may we learn from it?
6. What may we learn from this lesson about God's attitude toward the heathen practice of human sacrifice? In what sense does God require the sacrifice of self?
7. How does God's provision of a ram to take the place of Isaac typify the death of Christ for us?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 98. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Lesson IV—ISAAC AND REBEKAH

The Golden Text—"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."—Prov. 3: 3a, 4.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 24: 57-67

For entire lesson, see Gen., ch. 24.

COMMON VERSION

57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.

58 And they called Re-bek'ah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

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57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. 58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. 59 And they sent away

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59 And they sent away Re-bek'ah their sister, and her nurse, and A'bra-ham's servant, and his men.

60 And they blessed Re-bek'ah, and said unto her, Thou *art* our sister, be thou *the mother* of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

61 ¶ And Re-bek'ah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Re-bek'ah, and went his way.

62 And I'saac came from the way of the well La-hai'roi; for he dwelt in the south country.

63 And I'saac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels *were* coming.

64 And Re-bek'ah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw I'saac, she lighted off the camel.

65 For she *had* said unto the servant, What man *is* this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant *had* said, It *is* my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

66 And the servant told I'saac all things that he had done.

67 And I'saac brought her into his mother Sa'rah's tent, and took Re-bek'ah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and I'saac was comforted after his mother's *death*.

Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Our sister, be thou *the mother* of thousands of ten thousands, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.

61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. 62 And Isaac came from the way of Beer-lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the land of the South. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, there were camels coming. 64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel. 65 And she said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master: and she took her veil, and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Additional Passages for Study: Gen. 2: 18-24; Matt. 19: 3-12; Eph. 5: 22-33.

The Places—Beer-lahairoi, Haran.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, October 21	Isaac and Rebekah	Gen. 24 : 57-67.
Tuesday, October 22	Institution of Marriage	Gen. 2 : 18-24.
Wednesday, October 23	Duty of Husbands and Wives	Eph. 5 : 22-33.
Thursday, October 24	Divine Regulation of Marriage	I Cor. 7 : 10-17
Friday, October 25	Christ and Divorce	Matt. 19 : 3-9.
Saturday, October 26	Jesus and the Samaritan Woman	John 4 : 5-19.
Sunday, October 27	Noble Womanhood	Prov. 31 : 10-31.

WHOM SHALL ISAAC MARRY?

The promise had been made to Abraham that his descendants should become a great nation, in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Isaac had been especially given to Abraham by God as a son of that promise. But Isaac was now forty years old and as yet unmarried. There were practical difficulties in the way of his marriage. It did not seem right for "the son of the promise" to marry a heathen woman. The promise was given just so that the knowledge of the true and living God might be handed down through the descendants of Abraham, and so be at last a blessing to the whole world. That could scarcely be if Isaac's wife were a heathen.

But a little while before news had come to Abraham of his brother Nahor's family back in Haran. Gen. 22: 20. It was considered very desirable to marry in one's own family, and the members of Nahor's family were not exactly heathen as the Canaanites were. Perhaps a suitable wife for Isaac could be found in Nahor's family. Abraham decided to see whether it could be done.

He called his headman. Very probably it was the same Eliezer of Damascus about whom we read in ch. 15 : 2. Abraham told Eliezer his plan, and instructed him that, whatever happened—for it was a long way to Haran and Abraham might die before Eliezer returned—not to take Isaac back to Haran because he might be tempted not to live on in "the promised land" where he ought to live. Eliezer took the commission.

AN ORIENTAL WEDDING

The twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis gives us a very interesting picture of oriental life. Take your Bibles and look up the verses, while we point out the things to be noticed, following for the most part W. M. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book."

Eliezer set out on his mission in a style befitting

the headman of a great sheik who was going to bring home a bride for the heir of the house. He took a camel train with him. V. 10.

When the caravan reached Haran it drew up at the well, outside the city wall. V. 11. In the East towns are built near wells, not wells sunk in towns. It is not everywhere that you can find water, and when it is found a town is often built near it, not around it, for the water must be kept as clean as possible. Eliezer made the camels kneel at the well. Young camels are taught to kneel when they are told to do so. It was evening, just the time when cool, fresh water would be needed for the evening meal. There was no ice to cool and freshen the water, you know. The women were coming out of the town to draw water, just as women do to-day in Eastern towns. They were carrying their pitchers on their shoulders as Syrian women do, not on the head as Egyptian women do. V. 15. When Eliezer asked Rebekah for a drink she let down her pitcher on her hand, as anyone traveling in Syria may see women do, and said, "Drink, my lord"—*"Ishrub ya seedy"*—as anyone traveling in Syria may hear. V. 18. For her courtesy, Eliezer gave her a gold nose ring and two heavy gold armlets. V. 22.

REBEKAH AT THE WELL

Laban, Rebekah's brother, greeted Eliezer in true oriental style, and with true oriental hospitality. V. 31. It looks as if the camels were brought into the house, v. 32, and this is often done. They were given straw and provender, that is, some kind of pulse or grain. V. 32. Water was brought to wash the feet of the travelers, as is always done in the East. V. 32. Look up Luke 7 : 44; John 13 : 5ff. Rebekah's father, Bethuel, and her brother, Laban, managed the whole affair from her side, in accordance with oriental usage. V. 50. Presents of "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment" were given to Rebekah, as from Isaac, to confirm the betrothal, and other presents were formally made to her brother and her mother to bind the marriage contract. V. 53. This is in the usual form even to-day, and takes the place of our marriage ceremony.

The parting wish of Rebekah's family that she should be "the mother of thousands of ten thousands," v. 60, is a common bridal wish in the East. Rebekah was following the strict Syrian etiquette when she dismounted from her camel, and covered herself with her veil in the presence of her future husband. Vs. 64, 65. The veil was removed only when they were alone with each other. Their married life began when Isaac installed her in her tent as his wife. V. 67. In this case, Isaac brought Rebekah to Sarah's tent, for although Sarah had been dead for three years, her tent was still in the camp, perhaps as a memorial, until Isaac, as the heir of the house, should bring his wife to occupy it.

INTO THE HEART OF THE ROMANCE

So far we have been dealing only with the outside of this beautiful story. Let us get at the heart of it. Let us think of Eliezer, Abraham's faithful old headman, traveling off to Haran, knowing that the happiness of his master's beloved son, even the fulfillment of God's promise to his master, was in his hands. How much depended on him! His master trusted him to choose a wife for Isaac! To make a bad choice would be ruinous. There is no more sacred relationship than the marriage rela-

tionship. In marriage two people mean more to each other, influence each other more for good or ill, share life more with each other than in any other human relationship. Our Lord says that a husband and wife are "no more two, but one flesh." Eliezer felt his responsibility. And he did the only sensible thing to do, he prayed that God would help him.

Try to imagine Eliezer halting his caravan by the well just outside of Haran, and thinking as he looked at the women and girls coming out with their water pitchers on their shoulders that some one of these girls was to be Isaac's wife. But which girl? The good old man prayed that God would show him. Read his beautiful prayer in vs. 12-14. The girl who would give him a drink when he asked for it, and would offer to water his camels, too—she was to be Isaac's wife. He sees a beautiful young girl go down to the fountain and fill her pitcher. Oh, if only that were the girl! He runs to her, and asks for a drink. Now, in a moment he will know. Almost any woman would give him a drink—the rules of ordinary politeness would make her do that. But only a very kind-hearted girl would offer to draw water for all those camels. But the question is asked. How quickly the beautiful girl drops her pitcher from her shoulder and gives him a drink! But will she offer to water the camels? When Eliezer has taken his drink, she says brightly, "I will draw water for thy camels, also." So this is Isaac's future wife! Thank God!

It was a little thing, you say. But such little things display character. This quick willingness to take the trouble to water a wayfarer's camels shows a generous, open-hearted nature. And it was not a little thing. Even "a cup of cold water" may be one of the biggest things in the world if it is given generously. Our whole lives turn on such things as this. Rebekah's romance and all her happiness hung just then in the balance. If she had thought to herself: "I'm too tired to draw water for these camels! The old man is a stranger, anyhow; what do I care how he gets his camels watered?" her chance would have been gone. Many a young girl and many a young man has lost a chance for lifelong happiness and success by neglecting such things.

What excitement there was in Rebekah's home when she ran in with the news that a stranger had given her those beautiful presents, and that he wanted to spend the night at their house! How the plot thickened when the old man would not eat until he had told his story, and what a story! He was the headman of Grandfather Nahor's brother, Abraham, away off in the west. And Abraham was very rich, and he had a son named Isaac, and Abraham had sent Eliezer to Haran to find a wife for Isaac, and God had told Eliezer that Rebekah was to be the bride because she had given him a drink of water and offered to water his camels. Wasn't it wonderful? There was no denying, after what Eliezer told about his prayers and the way Rebekah had met the conditions, that God meant her to go home with Eliezer to be the wife of Abraham's heir. So the marriage compact was made, and sealed with gifts.

Of course, Rebekah's family wanted Eliezer to wait a few days before taking her off so far. But no, he could not wait. Jehovah had prospered him thus far, he said; let him start home to his master. They called Rebekah and asked her if she were willing to go with Eliezer. She said she was. So they sent her old nurse with her, and blessed her, and let her go.

What anticipations were in Rebekah's mind during those long days of traveling! How impatiently Isaac was awaiting the outcome of Eliezer's mission! Would Eliezer find a wife for him? What would she be like? One evening Isaac walked out from Beer-lahai-roi to be alone, so that he could think. There was much to think about. For one thing—there was his mother. He was still mourning for her, and now perhaps another woman was coming into his life. Many an evening he had walked out there in the direction from which Eliezer would return. But this evening he sees the caravan coming, and a woman riding on a camel. Eliezer is bringing him a wife! Rebekah sees a man walking in the field, and slips down from her camel, for it is not seemly for a woman to ride in the presence of a man! She guesses who it is, but asks Eliezer. Yes, it is her husband. She covers herself with her veil in the modesty of a betrothed maiden. And they walk together to Sarah's tent, where she uncovers her face, and they see each other for the first time.

The promises of God are being fulfilled. He has provided a wife for Isaac, the son of the promise, from his own kindred.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

57. And they said. Rebekah's mother and brother.

58. Wilt thou go with this man? With Abraham's servant.

60. Let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them. "May thy descendants overcome their enemies!"

62. And Isaac came from the way of Beer-lahai-roi. Isaac had returned from visiting the well which Hagar had named "The well of the living one who seeth me." Gen. 16 : 7-14. It was near Kadesh, in the south.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. What great sorrow had come to Abraham's family since the last lesson, and what sign of mourning was there in the camp?
2. Why wasn't Isaac married before he was forty years old?
3. What did Eliezer take in the packs of his camels?
4. What could Eliezer tell about Rebekah's character after his experience with her at the well?

5. How can we imitate Rebekah every day of our lives? Does Christ command us to do it?

6. Was Eliezer a good man? How will it help us to do as Eliezer did?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 58. What do the first four commandments teach?

A. The first four commandments teach that there is but one God; that we should worship him alone, reverence his name and keep his Sabbath holy.

Q. 59. What does the fifth commandment teach?

A. The fifth commandment teaches that it is our duty to love and honor our parents and to obey them in all things, in the Lord.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Why did Abraham tell Eliezer never to let Isaac go back to Haran?

2. What took the place of our marriage ceremony in the case of Isaac and Rebekah?

3. Illustrate oriental hospitality and oriental good breeding from this lesson.

4. Do you know of any cases in which a person's whole future has been changed by some apparently small thing?

5. Ought marriages to be entered into without careful thought and prayer?

6. From this lesson and the last reconstruct what you can of Isaac's character.

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called The Lord's Prayer.

Lesson V—APPETITE AND GREED (WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY)

The Golden Text—"Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."—I Cor. 9 : 25.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 25 : 27-34

COMMON VERSION

27 And the boys grew: and E'sau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field· and Ja'cob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents.

28 And I'saac loved E'sau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Re-bek'ah loved Ja'cob.

29 ¶ And Ja'cob sod pottage: and E'sau came from the field, and he *was* faint:

30 And E'sau said to Ja'cob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage;* for ᵀ *am* faint: therefore was his name called E'dom.

31 And Ja'cob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32 And E'sau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Ja'cob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Ja'cob.

34 Then Ja'cob gave E'sau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus E'sau despised *his* birthright.

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27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. 28 Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: and Rebekah loved Jacob. 29 And Jacob boiled pottage: and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint: 30 and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I am faint; therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die: and what profit shall the birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me first; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright.

The Place—Beer-lahairoi.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, October 28	Appetite and Greed	Gen. 25 : 27-34.
Tuesday, October 29	Appetite and Doubtful Things	Rom. 14 : 13-23.
Wednesday, October 30	Appetite and Christian Liberty	I Cor., ch. 8.
Thursday, October 31	Appetite and Duty to Others	I Cor. 10 : 23-33.
Friday, November 1	Appetite and Chastisement	Heb. 12 : 14-17.
Saturday, November 2	Appetite and Murmuring Israel	Num. 11 : 4-13.
Sunday, November 3	Appetite and Disobedient Israel	Ps. 78 : 29-40.

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THE TWIN BROTHERS

Isaac and Rebekah had been married for twenty years before they had any children. This was a great sorrow to them. It was not only that they wanted children in their family, but that they must have a son to be the son of the promise to them, as Isaac had been the son of the promise to Abraham and Sarah. Isaac prayed to God about this sorrow, and at last God answered his prayer.

Twin babies were born, both of them boys. They did not look at all like each other. The first-born twin was very unusual looking, indeed. He was born with reddish-brown hair, and he had quantities of it on his body. His father and mother named him Esau, which means "hairy." In those days names were not given to children just because they were family names or because the parents liked the sound of them; names that meant something in themselves were given so as to be a lifelong reminder of some special circumstance in connection with the child's birth or some hope of the father and mother for the child. The second-born twin was called Jacob, which means "supplanter," because even at his birth he seemed to be trying to get ahead of his brother.

THE CHARACTER OF THE TWINS

The twin brothers looked very unlike at their birth, and they grew up to be very unlike. Their father was a great sheik whose wealth consisted in flocks and herds which were taken care of by hundreds of servants. They lived in a more or less permanent encampment of tents. As the boys grew up it appeared that Esau, who was the older and therefore the natural heir of his father, did not take to the life of a great sheep- and cattle-owner at all. He did not like to stay around the encampment. He hated to do any work. He would not take any responsibility. He was a big, good-natured, impulsive sort of boy who could not stick at anything he did not like for five minutes at a time.. There was only one thing he really liked to do. He liked to hunt. At first he set traps for small animals and birds, and when he grew older nothing pleased him better than to take his bow and arrows and spend the day ranging over the field for deer.

Isaac, who was a mild, inactive sort of man, took a strong liking for his irresponsible son, and even encouraged him in his shiftless way of living because Isaac had a weakness for the venison Esau brought in. It is not that there is any harm in hunting, or that a love for the open air is not a normal part of the life of most boys. But Esau did not do anything else. He was the eldest son. He was his father's heir. He had the "birthright." Some day he expected to be the head of the family with very great responsibilities. Some day, it was natural to think, he would take his place in succession to Abraham as the heir of God's great promise. Esau was shirking his duty.

Jacob was very different. He was steady and dependable. He was "a quiet man." He liked to stay around the encampment, and help with its management. He was his mother's favorite. It looked as if he would be a better heir to Isaac than the good-natured, impulsive, shiftless Esau. Jacob himself thought so. And he watched his chance.

ESAU'S FOLLY

Jacob's chance came one day when Esau came into camp tired and so hungry that he could hardly talk. Jacob was preparing a mess of pottage, a thick broth made by boiling lentils in water with meat. The lentils Jacob was using were the best kind—red lentils—which gave their color to the broth. Esau came stumbling into camp, and saw the steaming pottage. He blurted out in his coarse, rough way, "Let me swallow some of that red—that red there." He couldn't even call it pottage—"that red stuff, there!" He wanted to gulp it down. Jacob said: "I'll tell you what I will do. I'll trade you this pottage for your right to be our father's heir." Esau could not wait till he could get something for himself to eat. He said: "I'm going to die, I'm so tired and hungry. What good will the birthright do me if I'm dead? You can have the birthright." But Jacob said, "Not so fast; will you solemnly swear to the bargain?" "Yes, I will," said Esau. "Give me the food." And so Esau, stupid, careless, heartless fellow that he was, traded his birthright, his right to be the heir of the father who loved him as his favorite son, his right to be the head of the family through which every nation on earth is blessed because it kept alive and gave to the world the knowledge of the true and living God—just because he could not stand it to be hungry and tired for a few minutes. Esau "despised his birthright."

THE MEAN ADVANTAGE JACOB TOOK

What Jacob did was mean, and there can be no excuses made for him. Such craftiness as this was the bane of Jacob's life, and he suffered bitterly for it. Jacob knew better than ever to make this trade with Esau the basis of any claim to be his father's heir and so the heir of God's promise. Jacob did become his father's heir, and the heir of the promise, but that was because Esau had "despised his birthright," had shown his contempt for it by trading it for a dish of broth, and because God chose to make something out of Jacob in spite of the mean and crafty streak in him. The whole story may be summed up this way: Jacob took a mean advantage of Esau's weakness.

WHAT WAS THE WEAKNESS?

We can all see that Esau was foolish to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. Just why was he foolish? What was his weakness? It was twofold. First, Esau did not look ahead. He did not stop to think that he was going to live a long time, and

that the birthright would mean something to him all his life. He could only think of the fact that he was hungry just then. If he had stopped to think he would have known that all his life he would regret what he was doing so hastily. If he had stopped to think he could have seen the day coming, as it did come, Gen. 27 : 34, when he would break down and cry like a baby because his birthright was gone. But he did not stop to think. He wanted that miserable pottage, and he wanted it then, and he was too stupid to see that it was never in all the world worth the price.

Washington Irving, in his "Life of Christopher Columbus," tells us that the Indians, when they first came in contact with the Spaniards, would eagerly trade gold ornaments for glass beads and children's toys. One Indian traded a handful of gold dust for a toy, and then ran off as fast as he could. We can see that the Indian was foolish, but we do not often see how foolish we are in just the same way. When we go to school or to college we are working for ourselves. We are getting ready for the future. If we do not do our best, if we do not work our hardest, we are trading our futures for the fun of idleness or indulgence in pleasures, perhaps harmless in themselves, which hinder our work, distract our minds, and ruin our self-control. We are trading the gold of our future for the toys of the present.

There is no appetite that plays on our shortsightedness more than the appetite for alcohol. Boys and girls or young men and women who drink it, just for the sake of having "a good time" now, just to be "good fellows" now, do not realize what a foolish trade they are making. They may not become drunkards. But they are trading good, healthy bodies for bodies weakened by one of the most insidious poisons known. They are trading the power to resist disease for a physical weakness that invites disease. They are trading a normal expectation of life for an expectation shortened by the well-known effects of alcohol. They are trading self-control for a greater or less slavery to an appetite that has killed more men and ruined more women than war. They are trading clear minds for minds more or less clouded and crippled. They are trading futures of great promise for futures that are under a shadow and that may have only sorrow and ruin in them.

The Indian who traded his gold dust for a toy was a back number: he did not know the value of things. So anyone who drinks alcoholic liquor is, in the mind of the progressive element in the world, a back number. He cannot be relied on; he cannot be efficient; he cannot have the best sort of success. General Pershing says: "There was a time when it was a natural part of a soldier's existence to drink and carouse. That time is past." The time for drinking alcoholic liquors is passing all over the world. Men never made a poorer trade than when they took to drinking them.

But Esau had a second weakness. He did not rightly value spiritual things. He thought more of feeding his stomach than he did of taking care of his soul. We live not in our stomachs but in our souls. But Esau gave up every spiritual blessing—the chance to be the head of the family that was to bless the world, the chance to be one of the founders of the nation into which Christ was to be born, for just one little, miserable mess of pottage. We are constantly tempted to make such choices. We do things that give us a little pleasure for the moment at the expense of our peace with God. We spend our time in idleness or pleasure at the expense of helping to keep alive in the world the knowledge of the living God. We indulge ourselves foolishly and miss the chance of following Christ and doing his work in the world.

Drunkards shall not "inherit the kingdom of God," says Paul. Why? Because they have chosen to gratify an appetite that ruins the bodies which are sacred to God, that confuses the minds which are given them to think about God, that weakens the wills which ought to be yielded to God's will, that just because it is a selfish appetite which they know it is wrong to indulge, will alienate them from God. It is very far better and happier for us if we cut off every selfish appetite, no matter how much it hurts us to do it, rather than to be ourselves cut off from peace with God, from the happiness which can come to us only in doing God's will, from God himself.

APPETITES TAKE A MEAN ADVANTAGE

These selfish appetites take a mean advantage of us just as Jacob took a mean advantage of Esau. They attack us at our weak points. The appetite for liquor assails us in our love of a little excitement, in our desire for good fellowship, in our pride at being thought a "good fellow." It is just the impulsive, generous, open-hearted, but thoughtless and careless men and women—in some ways like Esau—who are the easiest victims to alcohol. How lovable many of its victims are! But how stupid and weak!

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

27. A man of the field. A man who liked to wander about in the fields. **Dwelling in tents.** He liked the quiet life around the encampment.

29. Boiled pottage. A kind of broth made of vegetables, often lentils, boiled in water or milk, with meat or suet.

30. Feed me. Literally, "Let me swallow some of that red, that red there," referring to the color of the pottage made with red lentils, which are something like vetch. **Edom.** Means "red," so called from the color of the pottage. Esau's descendants were called Edomites.

31. Thy birthright. Esau was the first-born, and had therefore the right by birth to be his father's heir, the head of the family, and the successor to Isaac and Abraham as the heir of the promise.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Illustrate from this lesson the way in which names were chosen for children and new names were given to grown people in ancient times.
2. Why was there any harm in Esau's spending his time hunting?
3. How did Esau show his coarseness by the way he asked for the pottage?
4. Why was Esau shortsighted in his choice? In how many ways are we shortsighted, in the way we study, for instance?
5. How are people who drink alcoholic liquors like Esau?
6. How does alcohol take a mean advantage of people?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 60. What do the last five commandments teach?

A. The last five commandments teach that we should not take from others anything which is theirs —their life, their purity, their property or their good name—and should not even in our hearts covet what is theirs.

Q. 61. What great truth did Jesus Christ teach about our worship of God?

A. The great truth that Jesus Christ taught about our worship of God is this: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Why was Isaac fond of Esau and Rebekah of Jacob?
2. Can you observe any deterioration in the character of Isaac? Did gluttony have anything to do with it?
3. Did Jacob become the heir of the promise because he took a mean advantage of Esau?
4. Estimate what Esau gained and what he lost, and think of all the ways in which we are tempted to make bad bargains.
5. How do the insurance companies recognize that the use of liquor affects the expectation of life?
6. Show that anyone who drinks alcoholic liquor is behind the times.

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "Our Father which art in heaven," teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Lesson VI—JACOB DECEIVES HIS FATHER

The Golden Text—"Speak every man truth with his neighbor."—Eph. 4 : 25.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 27 : 18-29

COMMON VERSION

18 ¶ And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I; who *art* thou, my son?

19 And Ja'cob said unto his father, I *am* E'sau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

20 And I'saac said unto his son, How *is it* that thou hast found *it* so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought *it* to me.

21 And I'saac said unto Ja'cob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou *be* my very son E'sau or not.

22 And Ja'cob went near unto I'saac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice *is* Ja'cob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of E'sau.

23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother E'sau's hands: so he blessed him.

24 And he said, *Art* thou my very son E'sau? And he said, I *am*.

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18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. 20 And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because Jehovah thy God sent me good speed. 21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. 22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. 23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. 24 And he said, Art thou my very son, Esau? And he said, I am. 25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he

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25 And he said, Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father I'saac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son *is* as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee.

brought him wine, and he drank. 26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said,

See, the smell of my son
Is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed:
28 And God give thee of the dew of heaven,
And of the fatness of the earth,
And plenty of grain and new wine:
29 Let peoples serve thee,
And nations bow down to thee:
Be lord over thy brethren,
And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee:
Cursed be every one that curseth thee,
And blessed be every one that blesseth thee.

Additional Passages for Study: —Gen., ch. 3; John 8 : 44; Col. 3 : 9; Rev. 22 : 15.

The Place—Beer-sheba.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, November 4	Jacob Deceives His Father	Gen. 27 : 18-29.
Tuesday, November 5	Jacob Taught to Deceive	Gen. 27 : 1-10.
Wednesday, November 6	Jacob Prepares to Deceive	Gen. 27 : 11-17.
Thursday, November 7	Esau Weeps Over His Brother's Deception	Gen. 27 : 30-45.
Friday, November 8	Jacob Suffering for Deception	Gen. 37 : 29-36.
Saturday, November 9	Punishment for Deception	Acts 5 : 1-11.
Sunday, November 10	Christianity and Truth	Eph. 4 : 20-32.

AN UNHAPPY FAMILY

This is a sad lesson. It shows us a very unhappy family. It was a rich family. Isaac had grown richer and richer as the years passed. It was the family which had the promise of a most wonderful future, and that promise was God's promise, and therefore sure. It was a religious family, but the family religion had ceased to make much difference in the life of the home. It was a family that hardly trusted God any more. The members of the family took things in their own hands, and there were terrible consequences.

It is sad to see the beautiful romance of Isaac and Rebekah turning out like this. It is sad to see the twin brothers, whose birth was so much desired, the cause of trouble between Isaac and Rebekah, suspicious of each other, and trying to overreach each other. True religion will show at home, if it shows anywhere. When it begins to decline, the decline is first felt at home. Husband and wife draw apart. Brothers are jealous of one another. There are quarrels and miseries all around. The forms of religion may be kept, but the spirit is gone.

THE TANGLED WEB

Every member of the family was involved in a tangled web of deceit and distrust of God.

Let us begin with Isaac, the father. He has grown to be an old man before his time. He is almost blind, and heavy with years of inactivity. In him there are still some sparks of the Isaac we knew, the Isaac who trusted his father to the death, the Isaac who meditated in the field while he waited for the coming of his bride. But they are only sparks. He is something of a glutton. He has one great passion, and that is a passion for his generous and open-hearted but wild and coarse son, Esau. Isaac is determined that Esau shall be his heir. He knows that God has chosen Jacob. That was made very clear when the twins were born. Esau was the first-born, but God chose Jacob. God had said, "The elder shall serve the younger." Gen. 25 : 23. But Isaac dislikes Jacob, and he loves Esau, who brings him the venison he dotes on, and he is determined to overrule God, to give the birthright blessing to Esau in spite of God. Jacob deceived his father, but his father was trying to deceive God!

Then let us think of Rebekah. She is jealous of her husband's love for Esau. Jacob is her favorite son. She is suspicious of Isaac, and keeps him, dependent on her as he is, always under watch, for fear he will do something to prejudice Jacob's chances. She knows that God has chosen Jacob, but she cannot trust God to take care of his promise. She has not learned from Abraham the lesson of patient waiting on God's promises. She tries to help God with deceit. How blind she is to think that God needs to be helped by human deceit, or that he will receive such help!

Then let us look at Esau. He has despised his birthright. He thought so little of it that he sold

it for a mess of pottage once, years ago, when he was tired and hungry. He despised the will of God by marrying heathen wives, which had been a grief to both his father and his mother. Ch. 26 : 34, 35. He is not above trying to steal the birthright away from Jacob, with the help of his blind, old father.

Then let us look at Jacob. He had taken a mean advantage of Esau once. Now, when his mother proposes that they together take a mean advantage of Isaac, he is afraid only that he will be caught. When Rebekah says that she will take the consequences of the deceit if it is detected, Jacob is able to go through with the shameful plot without a quiver.

Mutual jealousy and a lack of faith in God will bring any family to this sad condition. We ought to tear out of our hearts envy, jealousy, selfishness. They will alienate our friends. They will spoil our family life. They will bring us to the edge of ruin, and to ruin itself, if God does not take pity on us.

TANGLING THE WEB

Isaac is afraid that he will die before he can cheat Jacob out of the inheritance God had promised him. He tells Esau to go and get him some of the venison his stomach craves, and says that he will give him the blessing God intended for Jacob. It is an awful thing to rush so in the face of God's will.

But Rebekah, ever on the alert to further Jacob's interest, is listening outside the tent. She does not trust God to see that Jacob gets the blessing. She plans deceit. She tells Jacob that if he will bring two kids from the flock, she will cook them so that Isaac will think they are venison, and Jacob will take them in to the blind old man and receive the blessing instead of Esau. But Jacob is afraid that Isaac will touch his hands or his neck, and will feel that he is not Esau, whose hands and neck are covered with hair. Rebekah has thought of that. She proposes to cover Jacob's hands and neck with the soft, silky hair of the kind of camel goats they keep. Centuries afterwards the Romans used the hair of this kind of goat as a substitute for human hair. So it is done.

Jacob enters his father's tent, disguised in Esau's clothes and with that smell of the wild, with the goats' hair on his hands and neck, and false venison in a dish. An acted lie leads to a spoken lie. It generally does. Isaac asks him who he is. He answers: "I am Esau, and I have brought you the venison you asked for. Eat it, and give me the blessing you promised." But Isaac wonders that Esau has killed and dressed his game in so short a time, and asks Jacob how it is. Lying outright leads to blasphemous use of the name of God. Jacob says that he has killed his game so soon because Jehovah helped him. Would anyone with any conscience at all ever plan a deceit if he knew to what lengths of lying and blasphemy it might lead him?

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ONE OF THE SEVEN WELLS OF BEER-SHEBA

Beer-sheba, the place of seven wells, was the favorite residence of Abraham and Isaac. Isaac was living there when Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and from the encampment round the wells Jacob started on his journey to Mesopotamia. The numerous wheels near this well are for the purpose of gearing the wooden machinery which marks a chain of buckets. A horse, mule, or donkey is fastened to the projecting pole and driven round and round.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive."

But Isaac is still suspicious. He tells Jacob to come close to him so that he can feel him, even though he cannot see him. He is puzzled because the voice sounds like the voice of Jacob. But the hands are hairy as are Esau's hands! The old man

is confused. Once more Jacob must tell an outright lie. Lie upon lie with blasphemy between: that is the way deceit grows. At last Isaac's suspicions are quieted. He eats the venison with relish, and drinks his wine. With his gluttony satisfied he calls the false Esau to come and kiss him, and he will give him the blessing that by the will of God belongs to Jacob. Jacob is deceiving Isaac, but Isaac is deceiving God! How did he dare to try it!

With the smell of Esau's hunting clothes in his nostrils Isaac gives the heir's blessing to Jacob. But the best part of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac leaves out. He knows that what he is trying to do is evil. He does not dare to say to the false Esau that in his descendants all the nations of the world shall be blessed. He does not dare to repeat the promise which we know was the promise of the coming of Christ. Gen 12 : 3. He blesses the false Esau with the promise of the land of Canaan, rich and prosperous, and with the promise of preëminence over his brother and dominion over the nations. But he stops short of the promise of Christ, saying only, "Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee." The web is now tangled.

GOD UNTANGLES THE WEB

What do you suppose God will do with a family like this? Our first impulse, in horror at the evil in the family, is to say that God must cast them off. Their sin has been so great that surely he must take the promise from them. But that is to reckon without the grace of God. Grace means free, undeserved, and unmerited favor. This family did not deserve any continuance of God's favor. But God showed them free, undeserved, and unmerited favor in not casting them off. In just the same way we have sinned so against God that we do not deserve his favor. But God shows it to us, as he showed it to Isaac and his family, out of his infinite and unchanging love, the love that will never give us up so long as there is the least chance that we will repent and accept his grace, the love that sent Christ to die for us.

God did not cast the family off, but he untangled the web they had woven. Each member of the family suffered the consequences of the evil that had been done. Let us see how they suffered.

Let us take Isaac first. Imagine how the old man felt when, after blessing the false Esau in defiance to the will of God, the real Esau came in and pleaded with his father to bless him! In one moment the trembling old man saw the hope of a lifetime gone. Esau was not to be his heir. He had defied God in order that Esau might have the blessing, but God had proved greater than man's defiance, and the blessing had gone to Jacob. Isaac sinned and gained nothing. Isaac sinned and in his very sin destroyed his lifelong hope for his best-loved son. What retribution on the old man!

Let us take Rebekah. As a result of the deceit she practiced, she lost her favorite son. Jacob had to leave home to escape the anger of outwitted Esau. He was away for twenty years, and the chances are that Rebekah never saw again the son whom she loved better than anything on earth, the son for whose sake she had dared so great a sin. What lonely years they must have been for her!

Let us take Esau. He was almost hopeless, anyhow. He had "despised his birthright." He had married heathen wives, and so showed further contempt for God. But when he learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob, he broke down and cried like a baby, in great bitterness. How often men weep bitterly for what they have lost by their own carelessness!

Let us take Jacob. He was "a quiet man." He loved the quiet life of the encampment. He loved his mother with great intensity. Yet he had to leave her. He had to leave home, and make a long and dangerous journey to far-off Haran, to make his own way in the world.

God untangled the web. Jacob was the heir of the promise, by the will of God. God overruled Isaac's defiance, the deceit of Rebekah and Jacob, and by the constancy of his love and the discipline of punishment, made Jacob what he became.

DISTRUST OF GOD

Distrust of God was at the bottom of all the trouble. How did Isaac distrust God? How did Rebekah and Jacob distrust God? How do we distrust God when we do evil that good may come? There is only one simple rule for living: Do right and trust God! Never do anything that is doubtful, never anything that needs argument to prove that it is right, never anything that has the least color of deceit, or jealousy, or selfishness, and trust God. God is forever and always behind anyone who will do right, and only right, and trust him.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

18. And he came unto his father. Jacob came to Isaac, who was almost blind, disguised as Esau.

19. I have done according as thou badest me. Isaac had sent Esau for venison, with the promise that when he had eaten it he would give him the birthright blessing.

20. Sent me good speed. Jehovah helped him to secure the venison in a shorter time than usual.

21. That I may feel thee. Esau was a "hairy" man.

23. And he discerned him not. He did not discover that it was really Jacob.

27. He smelled the smell of his raiment. The smell of the fields on Esau's clothes which Jacob was wearing. **See, the smell of my son.** The blessing is in the poetical form of parallel clauses, showing exaltation of spirit. The smell of Esau's clothes suggests to Isaac his son's future prosperity.

28. And God give thee of the dew of heaven.

In Eastern countries where there is little rain the dew is most important for the growth of the fruits of the earth. This verse promises a land rich and prosperous, the land of Canaan.

29. Let peoples serve thee. This verse promises preëminence over his brethren (kindred people) and also over foreign peoples and nations.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. What had Esau done besides selling his birthright, which showed a contempt for God?
2. What made Isaac suspect that it was not Esau, and what quieted his suspicions?
3. How did Isaac sin, and how was he punished?
4. How did Rebekah sin, and how was she punished?
5. What do you think of those who, like Jacob, hesitate to sin only for fear of being caught? What two persons will know every sin?
6. Show how one lie leads to another. Is there any difference between an acted lie and a spoken lie?
7. What is the grace of God? Do we need it as much as this family needed it?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 62. How should we keep the Sabbath?

A. We should keep the Sabbath holy, as a day set apart by God for rest and worship and for the highest good of ourselves and others.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Illustrate the causes of family unhappiness from this lesson.
2. How does such deceit as Jacob practiced show lack of faith in God?
3. Does the forgiveness of sin mean that we will escape the natural consequences of our sins? What does it mean?
4. Is it ever right to "do evil that good may come"?
5. How does God guarantee that the rule, "Do right and it will come right," will work in practical life?
6. How did Isaac show in the very blessing he gave the false Esau that he knew he was doing wrong?
7. How did God overrule Isaac's defiance and the deceit of Rebekah and Jacob to accomplish his own purpose?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is, "Hallowed be thy name," we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Lesson VII—JACOB FLEEING FROM HIS ANGRY BROTHER

The Golden Text—"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."—Ps. 103 : 10.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 28 : 10-22

COMMON VERSION

10 ¶ And Ja'cob went out from Be'er-she'ba, and went toward Ha'ran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put *them for* his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of A'bra-ham thy father, and the God of I'saac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE[1]

10 And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy

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15 And, behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of.

16 ¶ And Ja'cob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew *it* not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful *is* this place! this *is* none other but the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven.

18 And Ja'cob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put *for* his pillows, and set it up *for* a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Beth'el: but the name of that city *was called* Luz at the first.

20 And Ja'cob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of the city was Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my God, 22 then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Additional Passages for Study: Ex. 2 : 11 to 3 : 10; Jonah, ch. 1; Psalm 139.

The Place—Beth-el.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, November 11	Jacob Fleeing from His Angry Brother	Gen. 28 : 10-22.
Tuesday, November 12	Jacob Blessed Before Fleeing	Gen. 27 : 46 to 28 : 9.
Wednesday, November 13	Jacob's Flight to Haran	Gen. 29 : 1-20.
Thursday, November 14	Moses Fleeing from Danger	Ex. 2 : 11-22.
Friday, November 15	Jonah Fleeing from God	Jonah, ch. 1.
Saturday, November 16	The All-Seeing Providence	Ps. 139 : 1-12.
Sunday, November 17	God's Infinite Mercies	Ps. 139 : 14-24.

JACOB'S PUNISHMENT

Jacob had defrauded his brother. He had deceived his old father. Now he has to suffer for it. He had no taste for the life of a hunter or an adventurer. His taste was for company, and the quiet life around the encampment. But he had to leave home and set out by himself on a long and dangerous journey to an unknown country and to kinsfolk whom he had never seen. He loved his mother better than anyone else on earth. But he had to leave her, and it is probable that he never saw her again. From the time he was born God had said that he should be his father's heir and the heir of the promise, but he had not trusted God, and had tried to take by deceit what it was God's purpose to give him. Now he had to leave home like a fugitive and a beggar, not like the heir of a great sheik. This was the reward of his mean craftiness. This is the way deceit pays those who practice it.

ESAU'S MURDEROUS ANGER

Esau had once treated his birthright with great contempt. He had solemnly traded it to Jacob for a mess of pottage. When he found that Jacob had really received the blessing, by a trick, he was furiously angry. But he was not angry at himself for having made such a foolish and sinful bargain. He was angry at Jacob for taking advantage of it. So it most often happens that when we are furiously angry, we are angry at the wrong people. The next time you are tempted to be angry at some one, stop and think. Perhaps the fault is your own, after all.

But Esau never stopped to think. He nursed his anger against his brother until his wild, impulsive heart was on fire with murderous hate. He would kill his brother for this. But he still had some respect for his old father. It did not seem probable that Isaac would live much longer—he was so feeble and so nearly blind. He would wait until his father was dead, and then he would kill Jacob. What a

horrible thing murder is! Sometimes we think a little hate is no harm, but there never was a murder that did not grow out of a little hate, or a little jealousy, or a little greed.

REBEKAH'S PLAN

Rebekah heard of Esau's deadly purpose. The only way to save Jacob's life was to get him away from home. That meant a separation which would be very bitter for her, but it had to be. The best place for Jacob to go was back to her brother Laban's people in Haran. She told Jacob that he must leave her. But what excuse could she make to Isaac for sending Jacob away? It would break his heart if he knew that Esau was planning to kill Jacob; he must never know that.

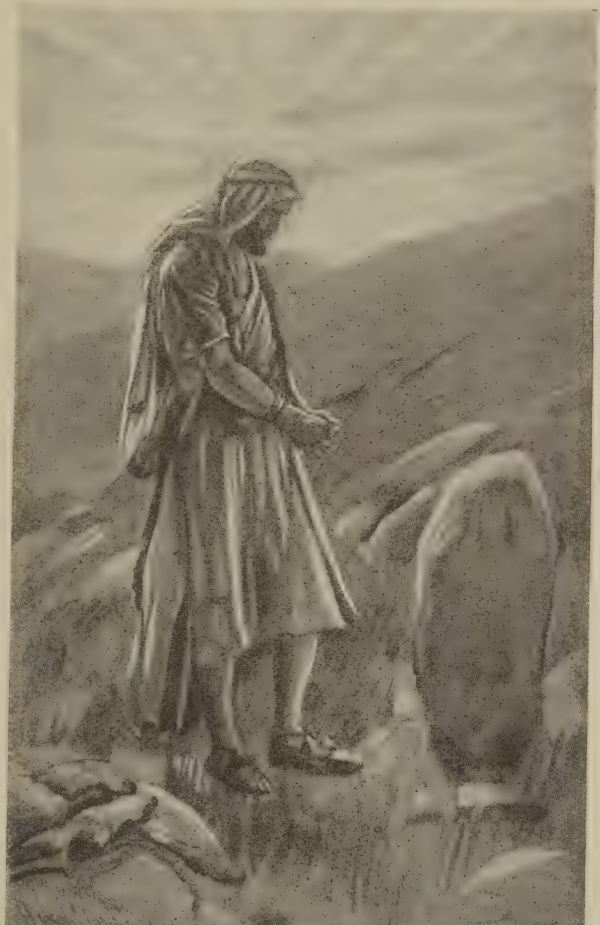
Rebekah thought of a way in which she could make Isaac himself propose to send Jacob to Haran. Both Isaac and Rebekah had been very much hurt because Esau had married heathen Hittite women. That gave Rebekah her clue. She went to Isaac, and said that the Hittite women were worrying her to death, and that she did not know what she would do if Jacob married one of them. Isaac was very much aroused. He called Jacob to him and said: "You must not marry a heathen woman. You must go back to your mother's people, and get a wife from her family. You are the heir of the promise now; I will give you the blessing of Abraham, and let you go." So Isaac, submitting now to the will of God, gave Jacob the full blessing of Abraham, and sent him away.

JACOB LEAVES HOME

Jacob left home in disgrace. It is true that he had received the blessing of Abraham. It is true that he was going to Haran to marry a wife from Bethuel's family, as his father had done. But how different his romance from that of his father! His father's marriage had been arranged by Abraham's headman, who had made the journey to Haran with a camel train, bearing rich presents. Everything had been in the style which befitted the marriage of the heir of a great house. Jacob started off alone. He was his father's heir, indeed. But he went alone, with no rich presents. He went like a fugitive and a beggar.

It was a very sad and lonely man who took the beaten track northward from Beer-sheba. Mile after mile he plodded along, thinking of what he had left and of what lay before him. The quiet home life he enjoyed was over. His twin brother was determined to kill him as soon as his old father died. He would not see the mother he loved for many a day—perhaps never again. Here he was, a lonely traveler with many, many miles before him, and his own way to make in the world. It looked as if God had forsaken him. It really would not be surprising if God had cast him off after the way he had acted. Besides, God was the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac. He was known only in that quiet encampment back in Beer-sheba. The heathen through whose country he was passing, and through whose country he must pass day after day, did not know him. Perhaps he had left God back in Beer-sheba! That was the worst—perhaps Jehovah was not his God any more.

So he trudged on, mile after mile over the mountains, not noticing how far he was going, until



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JACOB'S VOW

when he had gone about forty miles the sun set and the Syrian night came swiftly down. He must spend the night right where he was. The hills were dark and forbidding. Dean Stanley tells us that where night overtook Jacob, "the track winds through an uneven valley, covered, as with gravestones, by large sheets of bare rock; some few here and there standing up." Here, among these bare rocks, he made his bed. Could anything have been more desolate? To spend the night on the hard ground, with a stone under his head for a pillow, with the bleak hills around, a fugitive from home, and forsaken by God!

JACOB'S LADDER

Jacob fell asleep alone in the dark valley. And as he slept, he dreamed. He dreamed that right out of that dark valley a ladder rose. It rose, and rose, and rose, until it rested on the heavens above. Up and down the ladder bright angels went and came. It seemed as if these bright angels were rising from about his head, carrying his troubles up to God, and hurrying back with comfort and with help. Above the ladder, where it touched the heavens, stood Jehovah himself! And Jehovah said: "I am your father's God. I will give you the very ground on which you are lying. You will become a great nation, and all this land will belong to you. Every nation in the world will receive a blessing through you. I have not left you, as you thought. I am with you right here, and I will keep you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land you are leaving. I will keep every promise I have made to you." This is what Jehovah said in the dead of night to the lonely fugitive, while Jehovah's angels went and came along the shining ladder.

Jacob awoke, all bewildered and awe-struck! "Jehovah is here in this barren spot," he thought. "Jehovah has not cast me off, as wicked as I have been. Jehovah has promised me the blessing of Abraham in spite of everything. Oh, what a dreadful place this is. This very valley is where Jehovah lives. This very place is the gate of heaven!"

TWO GREAT TRUTHS

Jacob was taught two great truths that night.

First, he was taught that God is everywhere. God was just as much in that bleak valley as he was in the quiet camp at Beer-sheba. God was just as much there by Jacob's pillow as he was in the heavens above. Let us learn that. Any place is the house of God; any place is the gate of heaven. God lives in every place, and the gates to him are open everywhere!

"Dean Stanley tells us a story of a girl whose grandfather, not believing in the existence of God, had written above his bed, 'God is no where.' The child was only learning to read. Words of more than one syllable were yet beyond her, so she spelled out in her own way what her grandfather had written, and it read for her 'God is now here.' It was the great lesson that Jacob learned at Bethel."

Second, Jacob was taught that God never forsakes anyone. God's love never fails. Jacob had been very wicked. He had not trusted God, and he had stooped to the meanest kind of deceit and lying. But God did not cast him off and forsake him. God never gave Jacob up. He never gives anyone up. This is the wonderful thing about God's love. It is easy to love those who treat us well, and who love us in return. It is hard to love those who treat us ill, who constantly displease us, and sin against us. But God does that hard thing. God so loved the world—that is, the whole world of people who treat him ill, who disobey him, and sin against him—that he gave his only begotten Son to save from perishing anyone who is willing to be saved. Though Jacob still had much to learn before he could please God very much, God never forsook him, but kept on loving him and working with him. Is there anything in the world more shameful than holding out against such wonderful love as the love of our God for us?

JACOB'S PILLAR

When morning came, Jacob set up a pillar to commemorate this turning point in his life. Before this he had heard about God, and believed in God, but he never had such personal dealings with God before. Now he knew that God would always be with him and would always bless him. He took the very stone he had put under his head for a pillow when that dark night had fallen around him in his loneliness, and set it up on end. He took some of the oil he had with him and poured it over the stone to anoint, or consecrate, it as a perpetual memorial of the great blessing he had received in that spot. He called the place Bethel, which means "House of God." It was ever afterwards a sacred place to Jacob and his descendants.

JACOB'S VOW

Then Jacob made a vow. God had promised many things to Jacob. Now Jacob made promises to God That is only fair. He promised that if God woul bring him home in peace he would make that ver place a sanctuary where God should regularly b thanked and praised. He promised, too, that h would give God a tenth of all his possessions. Hi rule is the very best rule for giving, "Of all tha thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unt thee." Notice three things: First, when we giv anything to God, we are only returning part o what he has given us. We haven't a single thin and we never will have a single thing, which w have not received from God. Second, giving e presses our gratitude to God. He has given us al absolutely all. We give part directly back to hi in gratitude. Third, it shows that we are alway grateful for everything if we always give back t God some regular part of everything.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

11. And he lighted upon a certain place. Literally, he hit upon the place, the divinely appointed place.

13. Jehovah stood above it. Or, beside him. **Thy seed.** His descendants.

14. As the dust of the earth. Innumerable.

19. And he called the name of that place Beth-el. Bethel means the "house of God." **But the name of the city was Luz at the first.** It was in the vicinity of a city originally called Luz.

22. Shall be God's house. A sanctuary for the worship of God.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. In what did Jacob's punishment consist?
2. What shows that there was still some good in Esau?
3. Why did not Rebekah tell Isaac what Esau planned to do?
4. What is there to show that Jacob left home in disgrace?
5. Describe the place in which Jacob spent the night.
6. Why were the angels "ascending and descending" rather than descending and ascending?
7. What two things did the dream teach Jacob about God? Are these two things still true?
8. What two promises did Jacob make to show his gratitude to God? What similar promises ought we to make and keep?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 63. How should we value our bodies?

A. We should value our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, to be kept pure and in health, that in them we may serve and glorify God.

Q. 64. What is our duty to our home?

A. Our duty to our home is to fill it with devotion to God and with the spirit of love, so that it will be a blessing to every member of the household and to the community.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. How did God show both his justice and his mercy in his dealings with Jacob?
2. Why might Esau have been better angry at himself than at Jacob?
3. What causes murder?
4. What reasons did Jacob have for thinking that God had forsaken him?
5. How does Ps. 139 : 7-12 teach the same lesson as Jacob's dream?
6. What is the great proof of God's unfailing love for us?
7. Why is Jacob's rule a good rule for giving?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, "Thy kingdom come," we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Lesson VIII—JACOB WINS ESAU

The Golden Text—"A soft answer turneth away wrath."—Prov. 15 : 1.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 33 : 1-11

COMMON VERSION

1 And Ja'cob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, E'sau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Le'ah, and unto Ra'chel, and unto the two handmaids.

2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Le'ah and her children after, and Ra'chel and Jo'seph hindermost.

3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And E'sau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who *are* those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

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1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. 2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. 3 And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. 4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. 5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are these with thee? And he said, The children whom God hath gra-

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6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

7 And Le'ah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Jo'seph near and Ra'chel, and they bowed themselves.

8 And he said, What *meanest* thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, *These are* to find grace in the sight of my lord.

9 And E'sau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

10 And Ja'cob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took *it*.

ciously given thy servant. 6 Then the handmaids came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. 7 And Leah also and her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. 8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this company which I met? And he said, To find favor in the sight of my lord. 9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; let that which thou hast be thine. 10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found favor in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; forasmuch as I have seen thy face, as one seeth the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. 11 Take, I pray thee, my gift that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

Additional Passages for Study: Prov. 18 : 19; Matt. 18 : 15-35; Luke 6 : 27-38; Rom. 12 : 17-21.

The Place—Near the brook Jabbok.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, November 18	Jacob Wins Esau	Gen. 33 : 1-11.
Tuesday, November 19	Jacob Fears Esau	Gen. 32 : 3-12.
Wednesday, November 20	Jacob Sends Presents to Esau	Gen. 32 : 13-23.
Thursday, November 21	Jacob Wrestles with the Angel	Gen. 32 : 24-32.
Friday, November 22	Dealing with an Offending Brother	Matt. 18 : 15-22.
Saturday, November 23	The Unmerciful Servant	Matt. 18 : 23-35.
Sunday, November 24	How to Win Our Enemies	Luke 6 : 27-38.

A BROKEN FAMILY

Twenty years had passed since Jacob meanly deceived his father, Isaac, and outreached his brother, Esau. Twenty years had passed since Esau's murderous rage against his brother had driven Jacob, a fugitive and a beggar, from home. Rebekah, separated from her favorite son and estranged from the other, had died. Isaac still lived on now near Hebron, where Abraham, Sarah, and Rebekah were buried. Esau had separated from his father and set up for himself, with his heathen wives and children, down south in the land of Seir, afterwards called the land of Edom. As we remember, Edom was a name that had been given to Esau, and his descendants were called Edomites. They afterwards made the land of Seir their own country and lived there. Jealousy, deceit, anger, and distrust of God had brought great sorrow to this family, so beautifully established in the romantic marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

JACOB'S WEALTH

During the twenty years in Haran, industry and shrewdness, in which there was a bad streak of his old deceitfulness, had made Jacob very rich. Genesis 32 : 5, 14, 15 shows us in what the wealth of a great sheik consisted—herds of oxen, camels, asses, sheep, and goats, and large numbers of menservants and maidservants. When he moved from place to place it was in a large caravan, the members of the family riding on camels, with the baggage of the party on pack animals, and the servants driving and tending the flocks and herds, making and breaking camp, and serving their masters.

JACOB'S FAMILY

Jacob had a large family. He had married two of the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother Leah and Rachel, who was his best-loved wife, and besides he had children by Bilhah, Rachel's maid and Zilpah, Leah's maid. It was the custom of the sheiks of that day to make such marriages. God had not yet expressly forbidden them. But Jacob had unending trouble, caused by the mutual jealousies and ambitions of his two wives. Jacob had at this time, eleven sons. Leah's sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Rachel's only son was Joseph. Benjamin was not yet born. Bilhah's sons were Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah's sons were Gad and Asher. These sons of Jacob, together with Benjamin, became the ancestors of "the children of Israel"—we shall see a little later why they were called "the children of Israel"—through whom God blessed the world, according to

the promise made to Abraham, with the true knowledge of himself as the living and loving God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

WHY JACOB LEFT HARAN

Jacob's great prosperity had aroused the envy of the avaricious and selfish Laban and his family. This envy grew so mean and threatening that God told Jacob to leave Haran and go back to the country where he was born, the country which God had promised at Bethel to give him for his own. So one day, at sheep-shearing time, the busiest time of year for a great sheep owner such as Laban was, when the camps of Laban and Jacob were about three-days' journey apart, Jacob gathered his caravan hastily together, crossed the Euphrates River at a ford, and traveled as fast as the women and children could go and as the cattle could be driven, southwest toward the Jordan. It was an anxious time. What would Laban do when he heard they were gone? Laban pursued them, and caught them near the brook Jabbok. After some bitter words, Jacob and Laban came to a better understanding. They made a covenant not to harm each other. To bind this covenant, according to the custom of the East, they ate a meal together. Then they set up a cairn, or heap of stones, as a sort of monument of their covenant, agreeing that neither party should pass that cairn on the way to attack the other. This cairn was called Mizpah, Gen. 31: 49, which means "watch-tower," because it watched between them, and Laban said, "Jehovah watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another," words used as the "Mizpah benediction," with which we are so familiar in our Christian Endeavor societies.

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JACOB AND ESAU

DANGER FROM ESAU

One danger was passed, but a worse danger threatened. What would Esau do? Canaan was very near now. Did Esau still cherish that murderous rage which had driven Jacob from home? Would he take bitter revenge now on Jacob, on his helpless wives and children, some of them only babies? What a price that would be to pay for the old deceit!

One thing was certain—it would not do to take Esau by surprise. That would be to invite disaster. So Jacob sent off messengers to the land of Seir to tell Esau that he was coming back to Canaan with all his family and his possessions, and that he hoped Esau would let bygones be bygones. But the messengers returned with the terrible news that Esau was coming up from Mount Seir with four hundred men. Four hundred men against this peaceful caravan of menservants and maidservants, flocks and herds, women and children! It looked like the worst.

JACOB WINS ESAU

There was still a good deal of the old deceitfulness in Jacob, but he had learned something twenty years before at Bethel that he never forgot. He had learned that God was his God, and that if he trusted God, he would take care of him. So, in great anxiety and terror, Jacob prayed to God. It is a wonderful prayer. Be sure to read it. Gen. 32: 9-12. See how he confessed his dependence on God. See how he confessed his unworthiness of all God's loving-kindness to him. He knew that he had not deserved well of God. Those two things, a sense of dependence on God and the sense of our own unworthiness, are in every real prayer. Then see how Jacob asked God for just what he desired—deliverance for himself and his family from the revenge of Esau. And then see how he pleaded the promises of God. We can learn much about prayer from this prayer of Jacob's.

Then having prayed, Jacob did the best he could to bring about the answer to his prayers. They were camped on the banks of the brook Jabbok, Jacob selected a noble present from his flocks and herds to send on ahead to Esau as a sort of peace-offering. But instead of sending the great drove all at once, he divided it into several smaller droves, each in charge of herdsmen. He told the herdsmen to take their droves across the Jabbok one at a time, with a good distance between them, and to drive them in the direction from which Esau was coming. When the first drove met Esau, the herds-

men were to say to him, "This drove is a present which thy servant Jacob is sending to his lord Esau; Jacob himself is coming on behind." Then after a little while another drove would meet Esau, and the herdsmen would deliver the same message. And again, after a little while, there would come another drove and the same message. And then another, and another. Jacob thought that, however Esau might feel about the first present and the first message, surely present after present and message after message would at least soften his anger.

Then that night Jacob sent his whole caravan, with his wives and children, across the Jabbok. He lingered behind, in the darkness of the night, to pray. He had the most wonderful experience of his life. He wrestled all night with the angel of Jehovah, God in human form! He wrestled with his whole body and mind; he wrestled by faith and prayer. He would not let the angel of Jehovah go until he had received a blessing. He prevailed by faith and prayer. And when he had prevailed by faith and prayer, the angel of Jehovah said to him, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Israel means, "He striveth with God." And Jacob's descendants were called the children of Israel because their great forefather strove with God by faith and prayer, and prevailed! Jacob called that holy place where he had wrestled with God, Peniel, or Penuel, which means "the face of God," because, as he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." This was the great turning point in Jacob's life. Before this he had not wholly trusted God; he had trusted to his own strength and shrewdness. Now he had learned that only faith in God brings the blessing.

THE RECONCILIATION

It was early morning. The country around was beautiful. It was like a great park, broken by lovely glades. Forests of evergreen oak and pine line the banks of the Jabbok, while at the ford itself, the stream is almost hidden by thickets of oleander. The glittering spears of Esau's warriors caught the early morning light. But Jacob was no longer afraid. As another has said, in effect, "As Jacob had prevailed against the angel of Jehovah by prayer and entreaty, now he also prevails by humility and modesty against Esau."

At Jacob's direction each mother gathered her children around her. They stood in little groups, Bilhah with her children, and Zilpah with her children first, and then Leah with her children, and last of all, Rachel, the beloved, with Joseph. Thus they awaited the outcome of the meeting between the brothers. The meeting gives us a glimpse of oriental manners. Jacob wished to express his humility before the brother he had wronged, so as he approached Esau he prostrated himself seven times before him. What would Esau do? God had heard Jacob's prayer. The wild and impetuous Esau, with all his faults, could not hold a grudge when he was approached in such a friendly way. In true Eastern fashion, Esau ran to meet Jacob. They embraced each other. They kissed each other. The long-estranged brothers wept on each others' shoulders. So is emotion expressed in the East.

Then Esau had to see the mothers and their children. The handmaids and their children came first. Then came Leah and her children. Last and most precious in Jacob's eyes, came Rachel and Joseph. They bowed in the Eastern way before Esau. Then Esau asked Jacob why he had sent the droves of cattle. Jacob answered, "To find favor in thy sight." Esau said, "But, brother, I don't need them; I have plenty of my own." Then Jacob said: "If you are really friendly to me again, please take them. Seeing you again this way has been to me like seeing the face of God. Please take them, because God has been good to me." And Esau took them when they were so offered. So the brothers were reconciled after many years of estrangement. Some years afterwards we find them meeting again, at the burial of their old father, in the cave of Machpelah, at Hebron, where Abraham and Sarah and Rebekah were buried.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

1. And Jacob lifted up his eyes. Raised his eyes. **And he divided the children.** Each mother took her own children.

3. And he himself passed over before them. Crossed the Jabbok and went on ahead of them. **And bowed himself to the ground seven times.** Prostrated himself once, then rose and advanced a few steps and prostrated himself again.

4. Fell on his neck. They fell on each others' shoulders.

8. All this company which I met. The present of cattle which Jacob had sent on ahead.

10. As one seeth the face of God. As friendly as the face of God.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Name Jacob's sons. Why are their descendants called "the children of Israel"?

2. What is the origin of the words we use as the "Mizpah benediction"?

3. What danger was to be anticipated from Esau? What made it look as if he were surely bent on revenge?

4. Who should make friendly advances after a quarrel—the person who did the wrong or the person who was wronged? When should the person who has been wronged make the advances?

5. In what ways did Jacob acknowledge that he had done wrong?

6. What are the oriental ways of expressing humility? joyful emotion?

7. How did the conversation between Esau and Jacob about the present Jacob had sent on ahead show that they had a really friendly feeling for each other?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 65. What is our duty to our country?

A. Our duty to our country is to love it and pray for it, to obey its laws, to secure and sustain worthy officers, and to serve the common good.

Q. 66. What is our duty to other countries?

A. Our duty to other countries is to respect their rights, to pray for their welfare, and to seek justice and peace among all nations.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

Some of the most important events of Jacob's life fall between the lessons. The lesson comment will help to fill the gaps.

1. Find on the map the places mentioned in the lesson comment, Haran, the brook Jabbok, the land of Edom, Hebron.
2. How is the Lord's Supper, in a way, like the covenant meal which Laban and Jacob ate together?
3. In what ways is Jacob's prayer a model?
4. How does Jacob show his sorrow for the wrong he did to Esau in his prayer? in his actions?
5. How did Jacob prevail with God? How did he prevail with Esau?
6. What can we learn from Jacob about the way in which we may win back friends whom we have wronged?
7. What good qualities can you discover in the character of Esau?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, which is, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," we pray, that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Lesson IX—JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS

The Golden Text—"Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."—Prov. 10 : 12.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 37 : 18-28

COMMON VERSION

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21 And Reu'ben heard *it,* and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22 And Reu'ben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23 ¶ And it came to pass when Jo'seph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Jo'seph out of his coat, *his* coat of *many* colours that *was* on him;

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ish'ma-el-ites came from Gil'e-ad with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to E'gypt.

26 And Ju'dah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ish'ma-el-ites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he *is* our

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18 And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. 19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. 21 And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let us not take his life. 22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him: that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. 23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colors that was on him; 24 and they took him, and cast him into the pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. 26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our

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brother *and* our flesh. And his brethren were content.

28 Then there passed by Mid'i-an-ites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Jo'seph out of the pit, and sold Jo'seph to the Ish'ma-el-ites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Jo'seph into E'gypt.

hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him. 28 And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Additional Passages for Study: Gen. 13 : 8; Prov. 6 : 16-19; I Cor., ch. 13; Col. 3 : 18 to 4 : 1.

The Place—Dothan.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, November 25	Joseph Sold by His Brothers	Gen. 37 : 18-28.
Tuesday, November 26	Joseph Hated by His Brothers	Gen. 37 : 1-8.
Wednesday, November 27	Joseph Visits His Brothers in the Field	Gen. 37 : 9-17.
Thursday, November 28	Avoiding Strife	Col. 3 : 18 to 4 : 1.
Friday, November 29	God's Providence with Joseph	Ps. 105 : 1-22.
Saturday, November 30	Duties of Children to Parents	Eph. 6 : 1-9.
Sunday, December 1	Unfailing Love	I Cor., ch. 13.

THE LIFE OF A SHEIK'S FAMILY

Jacob had set up his main camp in the vale of Hebron, which had become, in a way, the center of the patriarchal life. Abraham, Sarah, and Rebekah were buried there in the cave of Machpelah. The aged Isaac was living there at this time. In v. 2, we find that some of Jacob's flocks—flocks of the smaller animals, sheep and goats—were being pastured at some distance from the central camp. In v. 12, we find flocks being pastured forty or forty-five miles away to the north near Shechem, and in v. 17 we find that the flocks had been moved ten or twelve miles farther north near Dothan.

It was only natural that the sons of a sheik, when they were old enough, should have charge of the flocks and herds. In v. 2, Joseph, at seventeen years of age, was off with his half-brothers, Dan and Naphtali, Bilhah's sons, and Gad and Asher, Zilpah's sons, learning how to tend the flocks. Later, v. 13, the old sheik, Jacob, sent Joseph north to Shechem to find out how his brothers were faring with their flocks.

In v. 3 we read about the famous "coat of many colors." We have perhaps thought of it as a sort of tunic, brilliantly striped. Probably, however, it was "a long garment with sleeves." The ordinary tunic was short, reaching only to the knees, and without sleeves. This tunic reached to the ankles and had sleeves down to the wrists. It was a finer tunic than the brothers had, the sort of tunic reserved for persons of distinction. It was probably partly colored, too, with a stripe around the skirts and the borders of the sleeves.

In v. 9 we have a hint of the greater impression the sun and moon and stars made on these Eastern nomads than they make on us. Their life was largely in the open air. The sun was very hot by day, and at night, in the clear Syrian skies, the moon and the stars shone with a brilliancy unknown to us. No one can ever forget the impression which a Syrian night makes, with the vast, clear blue of heaven above, shining with great lights.

In v. 20 appears another feature of their lives which is unlike ours. Water was scarce. In the summer time the streams mostly dried up. So water had to be obtained from wells, which were very precious. Dothan probably means "wells," which shows how important they were. Besides, water was stored in cisterns. The water in cisterns was not like spring water, of course, and freshly flowing water was called "living water." Read John 4 : 10-12 for a description of the "living water" at Jacob's well. Later there were in this same country thousands of cisterns. Most of them were shallow, but some were very deep. They had narrow mouths, and they widened as they went down. They were shaped something like a demijohn. The sides were plastered. In the winter time they were dry. Anyone who was thrown into a deep cistern, such as that into which Joseph's brothers proposed to throw him, could never get out without assistance.

Verse 25 gives us a picture of a merchant caravan on the way from the land of Gilead down to the land of Egypt. Dothan lay on one of the greatest caravan routes. The land of Gilead was famous for its spices. Who has not heard of "the balm of Gilead"? This camel caravan had a consignment of "spicery and balm and myrrh" from Gilead to the great kingdom of Egypt.

"HOUSEHOLD ENVY IS A HOUSEHOLD RAT"

There was trouble in Jacob's family, too. Joseph was the son of Jacob's best-loved wife, Rachel, the son of his old age. For sixteen years or so he had been Rachel's only son. Only about a year before this lesson Rachel had died in giving birth to another son, Benjamin. Joseph was a very remarkable boy. He was one of those very rare characters who seem to be good from the day of their birth.

It is not that they do not have temptations, but that they have greater strength to resist them, and a finer feeling about things. Because he was Rachel's son and because he was such a clean, straight, upright boy, Jacob loved him with his whole heart.

Jacob showed Joseph a decided preference. He dressed him in finer style than his brothers. His brothers took Joseph's fine clothes to mean that Jacob intended to set aside the order of birth and make Joseph his heir. Instead of realizing that their father had very special reasons for loving Joseph, and themselves loving Joseph for his fine and lovable qualities, the brothers were envious of him, and could not speak a pleasant word to him.

It would not have been strange if Rachel and Jacob had spoiled Joseph a little. Perhaps in his own simplicity of mind he did not realize what effect his two dreams, which were so mysterious and wonderful to him, would have on his brothers. At any rate, he much offended his brothers by telling them these two dreams in which it appeared that he was to be superior to them. Read his dreams. Gen. 37 : 5-11. They hated him like poison.

What a household! A household in which there was such a remarkable boy, of whom all the members of the household might well have been proud, whose career they might have watched with loving interest, but a household in which the older brothers hated the younger and wished him ill. Truly, "household envy is a household rat."

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THE SELLING OF JOSEPH

THE BROTHERS' EVIL CHANCE

They bided their time. Some day they would get even with young Joseph. Their chance came one day when they were far away from the home camp. They had been at Shechem, but had moved still farther away to Dothan, and were gathered on the hill of Dothan to eat together. Joseph had been sent by his father to see how they were getting along. He had not found them at Shechem, but a man he met had told him that he had overheard his brothers say that they were going to move on to Dothan, so he had followed them there. They saw him coming a long way off. "Ha!" they said. "Here comes the chief dreamer"—those dreams stuck in their minds like thorns. "Let's kill him, and be done with it! Let's kill him and throw him in one of these cisterns, and see what becomes of his high and mighty dreams. We'll tell old Jacob that a wild beast killed him."

Remember how envy made Esau want to murder his twin brother! Now envy did the same thing again—it made these brothers want to murder their younger brother! Envy, if it is not killed like a rat, even though it seems small and insignificant at first, will grow to just these horrible proportions!

But this was too much for Reuben. He was the oldest brother, and he knew that his father would hold him responsible for the safety of Joseph, and, besides, envy had not grown so great in him. Reuben proposed that instead of murdering Joseph outright, they should throw him alive into the cistern. Reuben meant to rescue him after a while. But the rest of the brothers did not suspect that, and they knew that no one could ever climb out of the cistern anyhow. It was death for Joseph either way, so they agreed.

When Joseph came up to them, they surrounded

him, with sullen faces and evil eyes. They tore off the fine tunic they hated so. Joseph pleaded with them, and begged them, and cried to them in a way to break your heart, ch. 42 : 21, but they hated him so that they would not listen. They pitched him down into the empty cistern to beat his hands and head vainly against its sides, and to cry for help until he was exhausted, and then probably to die a lingering and awful death from hunger and thirst. And then they calmly sat down to eat their meal. That is what envy does. Reuben went off to think of some way in which he could rescue his brother.

While they were eating they saw a caravan coming along the great highroad from the east to Egypt —an Ishmaelite, or Midianite, caravan, a long camel train, laden with spices and balm and myrrh. Judah said: "I have an idea. We don't get anything out of it if we just let Joseph die in this cistern. Besides, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood, and we don't want to be guilty of killing him. Let's sell him as a slave to these merchants. That will get him out of our way just as well, and we won't be murderers." They fell in with the suggestion, and sold him to the merchants of the caravan for twenty pieces of silver.

"DOWN TO EGYPT"

It looked very black. Joseph was a slave, on the way to the slave market in the great kingdom of Egypt. Torn away from home at seventeen, without a friend in the world who could help him! How do you suppose Joseph would have felt if you had told him that it was the very best thing that could happen to him? At the best he could only have said, "I can't see it, but I am willing to trust God and wait." But we can see now how God turned even the hate of his brothers to Joseph's great good. If any hard experience comes to us, an experience in which we cannot see any good, we must trust God and wait, and after a while we will see as Joseph saw, that God's goodness never fails.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

18. And when they saw him afar off. Joseph's brothers at Dothan saw him coming from the direction of Shechem.

19. This dreamer. Literally, "this master of dreams," referring to Joseph's dreams. Gen. 37 : 5-11.

20. One of the pits. There were many pits, or cisterns, in the vicinity.

22. That is in the wilderness. Uninhabited country where he would not be likely to be rescued.

23. The coat of many colors. More probably "the long garment with sleeves," such as persons of distinction wore. Jacob had dressed Joseph in this fashion as a mark of his special love.

25. Caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead. Called Midianites in v. 28. Ishmaelites were descended from Abraham's son Ishmael, with a mixture of Egyptian blood. Midianites were descended from Midian, another son of Abraham. These two tribes, on account of their common descent from Abraham and the similarity of their mode of life, were often confused. This caravan came from Gilead, the mountainous country east of the Jordan.

27. Let not our hand be upon him. Let us not do him bodily harm.

28. Pieces of silver. Silver coins, exact value unknown.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Why did Jacob love Joseph so much? Give several reasons.
2. What was "the coat of many colors"? What did it mean?
3. What were Joseph's two dreams?
4. How ought Joseph's brothers to have regarded their remarkable younger brother?
5. What did envy lead to? Can you illustrate your answer from things you yourself have seen?
6. Describe "the pit" into which Joseph was thrown.

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 67. What rule did Jesus Christ give for our treatment of others?

A. The rule which Jesus Christ gave for our treatment of others is: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." Matt. 7 : 12.

Q. 68. What rule did Jesus Christ give for our treatment of enemies?

A. The rule which Jesus Christ gave for our treatment of enemies is: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you."

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Locate Hebron, Shechem, and Dothan on a map.
2. What changes had there been in Jacob's family since the last lesson?
3. Was Joseph wise in telling his two dreams to his brothers? Do you think he meant to offend them?
4. How can envy be checked and killed?
5. What are "spicery and balm and myrrh"?
6. Do you think that Judah was kindly disposed to Joseph? Give reasons.
7. How did God bring good out of the evil that happened to Joseph?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray, that of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Lesson X

December 8, 1918

JOSEPH MADE RULER OF EGYPT

The Golden Text—"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."—Luke 16 : 10.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 41 : 33-44

COMMON VERSION

33 Now therefore let Pha'raoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of E'gypt.

34 Let Pha'raoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of E'gypt in the seven plenteous years.

35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pha'raoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of E'gypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37 ¶ And the thing was good in the eyes of Pha'raoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pha'raoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is?*

39 And Pha'raoh said unto Jo'seph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art:*

40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pha'raoh said unto Jo'seph, See, I have set thee over all the land of E'gypt.

42 And Pha'raoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Jo'seph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of E'gypt.

44 And Pha'raoh said unto Jo'seph, I *am* Pha'raoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of E'gypt.

AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE[1]

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. 35 And let them gather all the food of these good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. 36 And the food shall be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is? 39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou: 40 thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42 And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; 43 and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt. 44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt.

Additional Passages for Study: Matt. 25 : 14-30; Luke 19 : 11-27; Rev. 2 : 10.

The Place—Egypt

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, December 2	Joseph Made Ruler of Egypt	Gen. 41 : 33-44.
Tuesday, December 3	Joseph's Wisdom Revealed	Gen. 41 : 1-13.
Wednesday, December 4	Joseph Called to the Court	Gen. 41 : 14-24.
Thursday, December 5	Joseph Interprets Dreams	Gen. 41 : 25-32.
Friday, December 6	The Parable of the Talents	Matt. 25 : 14-30.
Saturday, December 7	The Parable of the Pounds	Luke 19 : 11-27.
Sunday, December 8	A Righteous Ruler	Neh. 5 : 1-13.

A SLAVE IN WONDERLAND

One day some Ishmaelite spice traders, fresh from the desert, slipped off their kneeling camels in a city by the Nile. They led a boy, seventeen years old, into the slave market. The short, slender, dark-skinned, dark-haired, large-eyed Egyptians glanced curiously at him. He was a Hebrew boy and he was so handsome. His home lay far to the north, where his father was a great sheik—at least the boy had always thought his father was a great

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sheik, but sheiks, however rich in cattle and servants, did not seem so great now. His jealous brothers had sold him as a slave to the traders, who were now leading him to the auction block.

The slave boy, from the free, half-wild life of a nomad clan which ranged the hills and valleys of Palestine, had come to the wonderland of the ancient world. He had come to the land of a great king, a king whose title was Pharaoh, just as the title of the emperors of Rome, in later days, was Cæsar. Egypt was the great land of the day, the home of learning, culture, refinement, civilization. There was no land in the world like it, except the Mesopotamian country in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, ancient Babylonia, and perhaps the island of Crete, famous for the labyrinth and the Minotaur. Babylonia and Egypt were the great lands. The slave boy stood in the land of the pyramids, of the Sphinx, of great cities, with magnificent public buildings and wonderful temples, of teeming industry, of learned and powerful colleges of priests. And over all, a king whose word was law, the Pharaoh!

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THE FAMINE INSCRIPTION OF SEHEL

We have several records of famines in Egypt. One of these is an important inscription on the island of Sehel, near Philæ. It is found on a large rock and tells us that about 2000 B. C. the Nile failed to rise for seven years and that a famine arose in the land in consequence.

The slave boy from the north was in the wonderful land of the Nile. They said in ancient times, and it is true, that Egypt is the Nile, and the Nile is Egypt. That mighty river, rising in the interior of Africa, had made Egypt. Egypt had been a barren and rocky desert. No rain fell there. Nothing would grow there. But for centuries the Nile had been the mother of Egypt. All the sources of the Nile lie in the region of abundant periodical rains. Heavy rains fell in Abyssinia; the Blue Nile and the Atbara rose and poured their waters into the main stream. About the middle of June the first rise reached Egypt. Then the White Nile poured its waters down, and the river of Egypt rose ten, twenty, thirty, forty feet at Assuan; ten, twenty, even thirty feet, where Cairo now stands. Early in October it reached its highest level. About the end of November the fields were mostly dry and covered with a fresh layer of rich, brown slime, which the river had deposited. This rich, brown slime makes Egypt. This long, narrow ribbon of fertile soil that the Nile has laid and refreshes every year is Egypt. It is scarcely any wonder that the ancient Egyptians worshiped the Nile!

The slave boy was alone in this wonderland. But there was one thing he knew that the Pharaoh did not know, that none of the learned priests knew—he knew the living and real God, Jehovah, the God of his fathers. He knew that the God of his fathers would take care of him, even though he was without a friend in the world who could help him. He knew that Jehovah, the God of his fathers, loved him and wanted him to keep straight and clean.

The spice traders put him on the auction block. Presently he was knocked down to the highest bidder, Potiphar, the captain of the king's bodyguard.

FAITHFUL IN THE LEAST

Now this boy Joseph had suffered a great wrong. His own brothers had sold him as a slave. You know what some boys would have said to themselves as Potiphar took them off to his house. They would have said: "My own brothers did me this mean trick. I don't believe there is any good in the world. All this that my father and mother

taught me about God and doing right is more or less nonsense. This Potiphar won't be fair to me. Catch me working for him any more than I have to." If Joseph had said anything like that to himself, he would have stayed a common house slave all his life. Some other boys would have said: "I'll get even with my brothers if it takes a lifetime. Some day I'll get a chance, and I am going to wait for it." They would have nursed revenge.

But Joseph did the menial work of a house slave in the best way he could. He was industrious, reliable, and pleasant. He got ahead. Anyone will get ahead who displays these qualities. But there never was a time when laziness, untrustworthiness, or a complaining spirit would get anyone ahead. Soon Joseph was made *mer-per,* superintendent of the household. All large establishments in Egypt at the time were in charge of such master servants.

Joseph was morally clean, too. If he had not been, all his industry, business reliability, and personal charm would not have helped him through. He was vilely tempted by the chief wife in Potiphar's harem, but he said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" A boy who will not do any wickedness nor sin against God is on the highroad to success, even though his cleanness may get him into trouble for a little while Joseph was thrown into prison on a false charge

In prison Joseph showed the same qualities as he had shown in Potiphar's house. He did not say: "I tried to be good, and see what came of it. I'm in prison. I might as well give up trying; God doesn't care." He trusted God, and went right on being pleasant and obliging and trustworthy. He attracted the favorable notice of the keeper of the prison, and was detailed to attend two high court officials who had incurred the disfavor of Pharaoh. These officials were the chief butler and the chief baker. In Babylonia the highest and oldest court officials were the chief butler and the chief baker and it was probably so in Egypt, also.

Dreams were considered of great importance in Egypt. One of the chief functions of the priest class was the interpretation of dreams. The chief butler and the chief baker each had a dream which they could not understand. God gave Joseph an insight into the meaning of these dreams. Read the dreams and Joseph's interpretations. Gen. 40 : 9-23. The chief baker shortly suffered the death penalty, but the chief butler was released and restored to office on the occasion of Pharaoh's birthday feast. The fate of each was in accordance with Joseph's interpretation of the dreams.

FAITHFUL IN MUCH

Thirteen years had passed since the Hebrew slave boy came into the wonderland of Egypt. For more than two years he had been in prison. He had one friend at court, the chief butler, to whom he had been kind, but the chief butler was a very forgetful and ungrateful friend. Restored to Pharaoh's favor himself, he forgot the pleasant, straightforward, capable Hebrew young man who had been his friend in adversity.

But the hand of God was preparing a sudden change of fortune for the young man who had trusted him and kept straight through all these hard times. No less a personage than Pharaoh himself had two puzzling dreams. Read them. Gen. 41 : 1-7. He summoned the college of priests and magicians attached to his household and asked for the interpretation of his dreams. They could not give it. The chief butler's tardy memory recalled the fact that there was in the king's prison a Hebrew slave who had a gift of dream interpretation. Joseph was called.

God told Joseph what Pharaoh's dreams meant, and Joseph told Pharaoh. They meant that there would be seven prosperous years in Egypt, immediately followed by seven years of famine. Such long-continued famines have several times occurred in Egypt, due to the failure of the Nile to rise.

But Joseph went on to propose a plan by which the food supply of the seven prosperous years might be conserved to tide the country over the period of famine. He suggested that Pharaoh appoint a food commissioner, with deputies under him, to levy a tax of a fifth part of the crop during the seven good years, to be kept as a food reserve to be used during the famine. Pharaoh and all his advisers were struck with the wisdom of the plan, and with the farsightedness of the young man who proposed it.

Pharaoh was an autocrat. His will was law. He turned to the royal party, and said, "Can we find anyone in whom the spirit of God is more than in this man?" Then he turned to Joseph, and said: "You are the man. I appoint you to the office of *T'ate,* the highest civic office in my kingdom. You are 'the second after the king in the court of the palace.'" To will, with Pharaoh, was to do. He stripped from off his finger the heavy signet ring with which he sealed state documents and which was the symbol of his authority, and slipped it on Joseph's finger. He called for a wonderful robe of fine linen, the weaving of which was carried to perfection in Egypt, and had Joseph arrayed in it.

He decorated him with the golden collar conferred for distinguished service to the state. He summoned the chariots of state, and drove through the capital city of Egypt, Joseph riding in the second chariot behind the Pharaoh, the royal heralds going before, crying, *"Abrech, abrech, abrech,"* which probably means, "Bow the knee."

So God dealt with the Hebrew slave boy who kept straight and trusted him. God raised him to the second place of power in Egypt.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

33. Let Pharaoh look out a man. Pharaoh was the title of the rulers of Egypt. "Let Pharaoh find a man."

34. Take up the fifth part of the land. Levy a tax of the fifth of the crops.

35. Under the hand of Pharaoh. Under Pharaoh's control.

38. A man in whom the spirit of God is. The spirit of God is regarded as the source of inward illumination and intellectual power.

40. Over my house. A sort of "mayor of the palace." **According unto thy word shall all my people be ruled.** The highest civic office in Egypt was that of *T'ate,* the chief of the whole administration, second after the king. **Only in the throne will I be greater than thou.** Joseph would be next in power to the king on his throne.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. How old was Joseph when he was sold into Egypt? How old when he was made ruler? Gen. 41 : 46.
2. How was life in Egypt different from the life Joseph had known?
3. What do we mean when we say, "The Nile is Egypt"? What were Pharaoh's dreams and how were they connected with the Nile?
4. What would have happened to Joseph as a house slave if he had been sullen or careless?
5. How did Pharaoh hear about Joseph's power to interpret dreams?
6. What prompted Pharaoh to appoint Joseph to a high office, and to what office did he appoint him?
7. What outward marks of distinction did Pharaoh confer on Joseph?
8. Tell in detail how Joseph's career in Egypt illustrates the golden text.

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 69. In what spirit are all God's commandments to be obeyed?

A. All God's commandments are to be obeyed in the spirit of love, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

Q. 70. What is a Christian's true success in life?

A. A Christian's true success in life is faithfulness to God and man in duties great and small.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. What was the title of the king of Egypt? Give the titles of three high officials.
2. What three countries were the seats of the earliest-known civilizations?
3. What were the Egyptian priests noted for? Why did Joseph shave his head and beard when called to interpret Pharaoh's dreams?
4. Describe the causes and effects of the Nile overflow.
5. What did Joseph know that was unknown in Egypt? What had God to do with his rise to power?
6. Describe in detail Joseph's proposal to provide for the famine.
7. To what qualities do you ascribe Joseph's rise to power?
8. What advantage is there to-day in: (1) industry; (2) trustworthiness; (3) pleasantness; (4) moral cleanness; (5) trust in God?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Lesson XI—JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

The Golden Text—"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."—Matt. 6 : 14.

TEXT OF LESSON, GEN. 45 : 1-15

COMMON VERSION

1 Then Jo'seph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Jo'seph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the E-gyp'tians and the house of Pha'raoh heard.

3 And Jo'seph said unto his brethren, I *am* Jo'seph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Jo'seph said unto his brethren, Come near

AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE[1]

1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. 4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come

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to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Jo'seph your brother, whom ye sold into E'gypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pha'raoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of E'gypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Jo'seph, God hath made me lord of all E'gypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Go'shen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Ben'ja-min, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in E'gypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Ben'ja-min's neck, and wept; and Ben'ja-min wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5 And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and there are yet five years, in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. 9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not; 10 and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: 11 and there will I nourish thee; for there are yet five years of famine; lest thou come to poverty, thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast. 12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. 13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. 14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15 And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

Additional Passages for Study: Matt. 6 : 12-15; 18 : 21-35; Luke 17 : 3, 4; Col. 3 : 12-15.

The Place—Egypt.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, December 9	Joseph Forgives His Brothers	Gen. 45 : 1-15.
Tuesday, December 10	Joseph Entertains His Brothers	Gen. 43 : 15-25.
Wednesday, December 11	Joseph Feasts His Brothers	Gen. 43 : 26-34.
Thursday, December 12	Joseph Tests His Brothers	Gen. 44 : 1-13.
Friday, December 13	Forgiving Our Brethren	Matt. 6 : 5-15.
Saturday, December 14	A Forgiving Spirit	Col. 3 : 5-17.
Sunday, December 15	Forgiving One Another	Luke 17 : 1-10.

THE FOLKS AT HOME

There were the older brothers, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and the rest who had hated Joseph so. There was the youngest brother. He was only about a year old when Joseph was lost to the family circle. He was Joseph's full brother, the son at whose birth the beautiful Rachel had died. His name was Benjamin. The older brothers had hated Joseph so because his father loved him. How did they feel about Benjamin as he grew up to young manhood, with his father's heart set on him? Were they jealous of Benjamin, too?

THE BROTHER IN EGYPT

The brother in Egypt had risen to be *T'ate*, or grand vizier, and superintendent of the granaries. These two offices were united in his person so that he might carry out the program of food conservation which he had suggested in view of the approaching famine. Joseph had married into a distin-

guished family, the family of Potiphera, high priest of the city of On, or Heliopolis. He had had two sons born to him, Manasseh and Ephraim. He had taken his position in high official circles in Egypt. During seven years of large harvest he had administered the plan by which a surplus was laid up in the state granaries. Now the famine had been on for some time, and Joseph was busy day and night with the distribution of food rations from the accumulated stores.

BROTHER MEETS BROTHERS

One day Joseph, or as he was called in Egypt, Zaphenath-paneah, Grand Vizier of all Egypt and High Food Commissioner, was transacting business in his offices. Word was brought him that some herdsmen from the north had been forced to come to Egypt to buy corn. Did the grand vizier desire to sell corn to foreigners; would he see these herdsmen? The grand vizier consented to see them. The simple herdsmen entered the august presence of the grand vizier and prostrated themselves before him. As they were ushered in, twenty-two years fell from the grand vizier's eyes. He knew them for his brothers. Yes, there is Reuben, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah and the rest—but where is Benjamin? He is not among them! Have these brothers made away with Benjamin, too? The grand vizier stiffened in his seat. The herdsmen could never guess that this high Egyptian official was the brother they had sinned against so many years ago. But the grand vizier knew them, and he must find out whether the years had made any change in these heartless men.

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JOSEPH KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN

The interpreter attached to the grand vizier's staff stood ready. Through the interpreter—for the grand vizier of Egypt could not be expected to know the barbarous language of these herdsmen — Joseph asked them why they had come to Egypt. They said, "To buy corn on account of the famine." Joseph answered them roughly, to draw them into telling him something about conditions at home: "Not at all. You are a lot of spies from some nomad horde, and you have come to find out how you can raid Egypt for its corn supply." "Indeed, no," they pleaded. "We are all one man's sons; we couldn't be spies." "Ha!" insisted the grand vizier. "You are spies." "Indeed, no," they kept on pleading. "There were twelve brothers of us; ten of us are here; the youngest is home with our father; and one is no more." But Joseph wanted to find out the feeling of his brothers for Benjamin. So he proposed as a test of their truthfulness that one of them be left in prison in Egypt as a hostage while the others went home to bring back Benjamin to the grand vizier.

Yes, the brothers had changed. What consternation there was among them when they heard that one of them was to be detained in Egypt, and that they would have to bring Benjamin, the joy of their old father's heart, down into that perilous land! In their consternation they began to talk to one another in Hebrew, never dreaming that the grand vizier understood. One of them said: "This trouble

has come on us because we sinned so again Joseph. Remember how he pled with us, and we would not listen?" And Reuben said: "Didn't I tell you not to sin against that boy, and you wouldn't pay any attention to me? Now God is requiring his blood of us."

The grand vizier heard and understood. He saw how they were thinking of their old father now; how they were worried about Benjamin; and he learned for the first time that Reuben had tried to save him. It was too much for him; the tears came to his eyes, and he had to turn away hastily. But Joseph had to be sure that everything was all right. So he carried out his proposal. He took Simeon, passing over Reuben, the oldest, because of what he had just heard, as a hostage, and ordered that they should be given the corn they desired. But he couldn't take money from his own brothers, so he directed that each man's money should be replaced in the mouth of his corn sack.

It was a very much worried party of men that set out for home, and their nervousness about the whole strange proceeding was made all the worse when they found that their money had been returned to them. What could that mean?

MORE TROUBLE AT HOME

Their old father was horrified when they told their story. He said that he could never consent to letting Benjamin go down to Egypt. "No," he said. "I lost Joseph, and now I have lost Simeon, and you want to take Benjamin away from me. If I should lose Benjamin I would die." But the corn from Egypt was soon eaten up. Starvation threatened them. No more corn could be gotten from the high food commissioner unless Benjamin went for it with them. At last Jacob had to consent to their taking him. Judah promised to be responsible for him. As they were ready to set off, Jacob blessed them in a prayer. He said: "May God Almighty favorably dispose the grand vizier to you so that he may release Simeon and Benjamin. But if I lose them both; it cannot be helped; I lose them."

BROTHER MEETS BROTHERS AGAIN

When the herdsmen presented themselves at the offices of the high food commissioner, Joseph saw that Benjamin was in the party. He sent for his house steward and ordered him to invite the herdsmen to his official residence for dinner. The herdsmen could not understand why a high Egyptian official should ask them to dinner. The only reason they could think of was that they were going to get into trouble on account of the money that they had found in their sacks. But they had to obey the invitation: an invitation from the grand vizier was a command. When the house steward met them at the door, they tried to explain about the money, but the house steward said, "That's all right; don't be concerned about it." And there was Simeon to meet them!

When the grand vizier came home from his offices, they prostrated themselves before him. The grand vizier inquired kindly for their father: "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" They prostrated themselves again, and said, "Thy servant is well, he is yet alive." Then the grand vizier turned to Benjamin. He said, "Is this your youngest brother, whom you told me about?" They said that it was. It was all that Joseph could do to control himself when he saw Benjamin, but he managed to say to him, "God be good to thee, my son," and then he went hurriedly out. He had to be by himself for a little while, and give rein to his feelings.

When Joseph had gained control of himself again, he washed the signs of tears from his face, put a strong curb on himself, and ordered that dinner be served. The grand vizier ate at a table by himself. Egyptians, particularly members of the priest caste and high officials, would not eat at the same table with rude herdsmen. There were two great surprises for the brothers at the table. When they came to take their places they found them arranged in the exact order of their birth, beginning with Reuben, the oldest, who had the birthright, on down to Benjamin. How could the grand vizier know their intimate family history? And, besides, when they came to be served, Benjamin received five times as much as any of them. They perhaps knew that the Egyptians were inclined to do things by fives. They surely were familiar with the custom of honoring a guest by giving him extra portions. But why should Benjamin, the youngest, be singled out for special honor? Don't you think that it was a test which Joseph devised to discover whether they were at all jealous of Benjamin? He could watch their faces while the grand vizier paid special honor to the youngest of them all. Joseph saw not a trace of jealousy.

THE FINAL TEST

But Joseph made one final test. He ordered that every man's money should be put back in his sack, and that his own silver drinking cup should be placed in the mouth of Benjamin's sack. The caravan had scarcely gotten out of the city gates on their way home, happy in the safety of Simeon and Benjamin, when an awful calamity befell them. The steward of the grand vizier came riding up, and charged them with stealing the grand vizier's drinking cup. They indignantly denied it. They were so sure of their innocence that they said, "Anyone who has the cup will go back with you as a slave." And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack! Of all the strange things that had happened to them in Egypt that was the strangest and most awful. Benjamin a slave! What would their old father do? It would kill him.

Back they were brought to the grand vizier. Judah, who was responsible for Benjamin, was the spokesman. He was in despair. "How can we clear ourselves?" he said. "There is nothing to be said.

We are your lordship's slaves." "No," said the grand vizier. "I will not be unjust. The rest of you may go. Only the man in whose possession the cup was found shall stay." But that was Benjamin! Then Judah made a wonderful plea. Do not fail to read it. Gen. 44 : 18-34. That plea settled it. Joseph could never resist that, even if he had wanted to, and all he wanted to know was whether his brothers were changed men. They were.

JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

What will happen now? How will the grand vizier take Judah's speech? What makes the grand vizier look so strange? Why is he ordering everyone out of the room? Why is he so shaken by sobs and cries? What is this that the grand vizier is saying? He is saying that he is Joseph. What can he mean? He is asking if his father is really still alive. The brothers are so stunned that they cannot say a word, but stand there trembling.

Then the grand vizier told them to come closer to him. They came in an uncertain, dazed sort of way. Then Joseph explained it all to them slowly and carefully as if they were little children. He said that he was really Joseph. He told them not to be sorry any more that they had sold him into Egypt. That was God's way of saving their lives in the famine. That was God's way of keeping the ancient promise that their descendants should become a great nation. So it really was not they who sent him into Egypt; it was God. God had made him ruler of Egypt so that he could save them. Then Joseph told them that he wanted them to hurry back to their old father, and tell him that Joseph had become lord of all Egypt, and that he wanted them all to come as quickly as they could to Egypt, with all their families and their flocks and herds. The district of Goshen would be ready for them. They could live there together, and Joseph would take care of them during the five remaining years of famine. "You can see," Joseph said, "and Benjamin can see, that I am really Joseph." Then he fell on Benjamin's neck and wept for sheer happiness. And Benjamin wept for sheer happiness. And, after the custom of the time, Joseph went to his brothers one by one, and embraced each one of them, and kissed each one of them—Reuben, Simeon, Judah, and the rest, who had sold him as a slave when he was only seventeen years old. Then they sat down, and how they talked over old times!

Do you think it would have been a better story if the grand vizier when he first recognized his brothers had had them all thrown into prison, and then sold as slaves to get even with them? Why not?

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Could not refrain himself. Could not control himself as he must do before his servants.

2. Wept aloud. Literally, gave forth his voice in weeping. **And the Egyptians heard.** He wept so loudly that his Egyptian servants outside heard, and the servants of Pharaoh's household heard, for Joseph lived at court.

7. To preserve you a remnant in the earth. To preserve them so that they might have descendants.

8. A father to Pharaoh. An honorary title of Joseph's office.

10. Land of Goshen. "A district of Egypt, adapted for flocks and herds, situated in the delta, a few miles to the northeast of On."

11. Nourish. Feed and take care of.

14. Fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck. Put his head on Benjamin's shoulder, a customary form of embrace.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. What was Joseph's reason for requiring his brothers to bring Benjamin to Egypt?
2. What was Joseph's reason for giving Benjamin such unusual attention at dinner?
3. What was Joseph's reason for putting his silver cup in Benjamin's bag?
4. Describe in detail Judah's plea.
5. What was the most generous thing Joseph said to his brothers?
6. What makes this story so wonderful?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 71. What has God promised for this life to those who love him?

A. God has promised for this life to those who love him, to give them his peace and joy, to make all things work together for their good, and to keep them unto the end.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Could Joseph have sold his brothers into slavery when they first came to his offices? Would he have been justified in doing so?
2. Do you think that Joseph forgave his brothers from the first time he saw them? Why do you think so?
3. Describe the tests to which Joseph put his brothers. What was the reason for them all?
4. How did Judah's plea satisfy Joseph that his brothers were changed men?
5. In his final talk with his brothers how did Joseph show his faith in the providence of God?
6. How does Phil. 4: 8 apply to the story of Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS (CHRISTMAS LESSON)

The Golden Text—"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." —Luke 2 : 11.

TEXT OF LESSON, LUKE 2:8-20

COMMON VERSION

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of Da'vid a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth'le-hem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Ma'ry, and Jo'seph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Ma'ry kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE[1]

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

The Place—Bethlehem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, December 16	The Promise of a Saviour	Isa. 9 : 2-7.
Tuesday, December 17	The Birth of the Saviour	Luke 2 : 1-7.
Wednesday, December 18	The Visit of the Shepherds	Luke 2 : 8-20.
Thursday, December 19	The Song of Simeon	Luke 2 : 25-35.
Friday, December 20	The Visit of the Wise Men	Matt. 2 : 1-12.
Saturday, December 21	The Home at Nazareth	Luke 3 : 39-52.
Sunday, December 22	Jesus the Son of God	John 1 : 1-5.

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Take the map, and look at the two wonderlands of the ancient world. One of them lies to the east in the fertile valley of the Tigris and Euphrates. As far back as history goes mighty peoples were there, but they did not know the living and true God. The other lies to the south in the rich valley of the Nile. As far back as history goes mighty peoples were there, but neither did they know the living and true God. Then look at the narrow strip

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of country between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan Valley, and think that while those mighty peoples were flourishing to the east and to the south, there was a nomad sheik in that little country who knew the living and true God. God had chosen him to be the father of the nation which should keep alive in the world the true knowledge of him. What a wonderful destiny for Abraham and the Hebrew people! To know the living and true God, and to bless all the nations of the world by passing on that knowledge to them! Gen. 12 : 3.

We have been studying the very earliest history of the promise God made to Abraham. We have seen how the promise passed on from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to Jacob. If we had gone a little farther we should have seen how the promise passed on, in Jacob's family, to Judah. Gen. 49 : 10. If we had gone still farther, hundreds of years farther we should have seen how, among the families of Judah's descendants the promise passed into the family of the great King David. II Sam. 7 : 16.

THE PROMISE TO DAVID

Now in those days prophets, priests, and kings were "anointed" to their offices. The holy consecrating oil was poured on their heads. A king, so "anointed," was sometimes called "the Lord's anointed." The Hebrew word which means "the Anointed One" is "Messiah"; the Greek word which means the same thing is "Christos," or "Christ." In the days of King David and the later prophets, the promise made to Abraham became more definite. It became a promise that this blessing should come to the world through a great King of David's line, "an anointed One," a "Messiah," a "Christ."

THE PROMISE DELAYED

Century after century this hope of a great king in David's line, a heavenly being come to earth, was cherished. But century after century his coming was delayed. As the centuries passed, the Hebrew people had very hard times. They were cruelly oppressed. But still the Messiah did not come. At last they passed under the power of the Roman Empire. This subjection to a foreign and godless power was hateful to them, and some of them, like the Pharisees, came to think of the Messiah as a great political deliverer who should free them from the Romans and set up a kingdom of free Israel as in the ancient and glorious days. However, there were always some who knew that the Messiah was not to be a political deliverer, but a spiritual deliverer and Saviour. They were "the poor of the land." They were the truly religious. They trusted God, as Abraham did, and as Isaac and as Jacob had done. They were the people like Joseph and Mary, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, like Simeon and Anna, like the shepherds near Bethlehem, who really knew God, and trusted him, and waited for the fulfillment of his ancient promise.

THE ANGEL

What is an angel? The word "angel" means "messenger." An angel, then, is a messenger. An angel is a messenger from God to man. An angel is a heavenly being, a spiritual being, dwelling with God, whom God sometimes sends in human form on a blessed errand to men. How gladly they must have come from the presence of God in heaven to tell men that the Saviour was born!

THE ANGELS' HYMN

The one angel who brought the good news was suddenly joined by a multitude of angels, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." This is the way the Revised Version translates the words, and that translation of the Greek words is more nearly accurate than the translation with which we are all so very familiar, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The two parts of the angels' song are perfectly balanced. We can see that better if we write it this way:

Glory	to God	in the highest
Peace	among men in whom he is well pleased.	on earth

THE PROCLAMATION TO THE SHEPHERDS

One night the little town of Bethlehem was crowded with visitors. They had been coming in, company after company of them, caravan after caravan. The great Augustus Cæsar at Rome had issued an edict that the people of the province should be enrolled, in a kind of census, so that the taxes could be justly laid. Every father of a household in the Holy Land who had the blood of David in his veins came to the ancestral seat of David's family to be enrolled there. Such was the custom of the Hebrews.

But now the crowded town was quiet. The peace of night had fallen over the walls and gates of "the city of David."

Off in the neighboring fields, shepherds were watching the flocks of sheep which were intended for use as sacrifices in the Temple. At least it is most probable that these were such flocks. Night after night they had watched. To-night, as their alert eyes searched the shadows for lurking danger they saw an unearthly sight. An angel of the Lord came upon them, surrounded by a heavenly brightness, such as of old time, so their forefathers had said, had appeared on Mount Sinai when the holy Law was given, Ex. 24 : 17, or such as had filled Solomon's Temple when it was dedicated, a glory of Jehovah so bright that the priests could not enter the Temple. II Chron. 7 : 1, 2.

Dumb with awe and wonder, they heard the most gracious words, words which told them not to be afraid, that there was great good news for them and

for every soul on earth, because that very day, in Bethlehem, the city of David, the Saviour, the Messiah, had been born! Then the voice of the angel, out of the shining glory of God, went on exultantly, telling them that they could see with their own eyes that this best of all news was true: if they would go to Bethlehem, to the stable they knew so well, they would find a newborn Baby, wrapped in bands of cloth, just like all newborn babies they knew about, and lying in a manger. That baby was the Christ, the Messiah, the Saviour!

Then suddenly the shining glory around the angel spread and heightened, and there was a great company of angels, a part of the heavenly host that surrounds the throne of God in heaven, and that heavenly host, visible and invisible, joined in praising God, singing and singing with such joy as never was known in heaven or earth before, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

THE VERIFICATION BY THE SHEPHERDS

Then the shining glory of God faded out of the Syrian night, and the angels of God became again invisible to mortal eyes. All was as dark, as still, and as lonesome as before. But it was no dream. The shepherds had received a message direct from heaven. The Messiah, the Saviour, was born! He was over there in Bethlehem. They were all impatient to see him. "Come on, then, let us go over to Bethlehem"; "Let us go across to Bethlehem at once," they said to one another.

How they hurried! As fast as they could go, across the fields, up the dark, gray, terraced ridge to the stable in the cave! And there in the dim light, they saw Mary and Joseph, and the little Baby, wrapped in his swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. The Messiah, the Saviour, a little Baby, lying in a manger in a stable! All the times they had thought about the coming of the Messiah, the Hope of the Hebrew people, the Hope of the world, they had never dreamed of finding him a little helpless baby, all wrapped in swaddling bands—in a manger, in a stable! But that is what the angel had told them they would find!

And when they saw the Christ-child they burst into telling, as fast they could talk, about the angel in the shining glory of God, and what he had said, and about the wonderful multitude of angels who had sung so exultantly. They told Mary and Joseph, as best they could and as fast as they could. It did not seem so strange to Mary, for she had seen an angel of the Lord, who had told her the strangest and most wonderful thing—that her little Baby was to be the Messiah, the Saviour! But she listened hard, so as not to lose a word the shepherds said, and she never forgot a word, and she often said over in her heart these wonderful things, and thought and prayed about them. Then the shepherds told everyone in Bethlehem—perhaps they went through the streets that very night, crying in their joyful excitement, "The Messiah is born; he is right here in Bethlehem," and people were roused from their sleep to hear it, and some believed it and were as happy about it as the shepherds, and some thought it was a wild story and went grumblingly to sleep again. And the shepherds told all the other shepherds in the fields and hills about. And probably they told it in the Temple to the priests for whom they were keeping the flocks of sacrificial sheep. And perhaps that is where Simeon and Anna first heard the great news. So the word spread that the Messiah had been born at last, and some believed and were glad, and some did not believe, and never believed. But the shepherds could never forget, and could never get over thanking God for all that they had seen and heard.

THE LESSON'S WORDS AND PHRASES

8. In the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night. In the neighborhood of Bethlehem, living in the open air, watching in turns.

9. An angel of the Lord. A heavenly being who acted as the messenger of God. **The glory of the Lord.** The heavenly brightness which is a sign of the presence of God.

11. The city of David. Bethlehem, so called because of David's connection with the town. **Christ the Lord.** Christ means "the Anointed One," in Greek, just as Messiah means "the Anointed One" in Hebrew. The Messiah, the Lord.

12. And this is the sign unto you. To prove that what the angel said was true. **In swaddling clothes.** The bands of cloth in which newborn babies were wrapped.

14. Men in whom he is well pleased. Literally, men of (God's) good pleasure.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. How was the promise to Abraham, Gen. 12 : 3, fulfilled in Christ?
2. Why was the coming King of David's line called the Messiah, or the Christ?
3. How long was the fulfillment of the promise delayed?
4. What special kind of sheep were the shepherds probably tending?
5. What is an angel? Why was the angel surrounded by "the glory of the Lord"?
6. Why might the shepherds have been surprised to find the Christ-child lying in a manger? Why was Jesus Christ born under such circumstances?
7. Describe the scene when the shepherds found the Christ-child.
8. Can we learn anything from v. 17?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 72. What has God promised for the life to come to those who love him?

A. God has promised for the life to come to those who love him that, being raised with Christ and

made like unto him, they shall serve God for ever in the glory and joy of heaven.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Trace the "heirs of the promise" from Abraham to the family of David.

2. What does "Messiah" mean? What does "Christ" mean? What do we affirm when we say, "Jesus Christ"?

3. Describe the town of Bethlehem and what happened there in the olden times.

4. What effect did the appearance of an angel have, Luke 1 : 13, 30; 2 : 10, and what did the angel say in each case? What may we learn from this?

5. What is meant by "Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart"? Who may have told Luke what he tells us in the first two chapters of his Gospel?

6. What is the meaning of the "incarnation"?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen," teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.

Lesson XIII—REVIEW—FAITH'S VICTORIES

The Golden Text—"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—I John 5 : 4.

Read Heb. 11 : 8-22

TO READ DURING THE WEEK

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, December 23	Faith's Victories	Heb. 11 : 8-22.
Tuesday, December 24	Abram Leaving Home	Gen. 12 : 1-9.
	Abram Helping Lot	Gen. 13 : 5-11; 14 : 14-16.
Wednesday, December 25	Abraham Giving Isaac to God	Gen. 22 : 1-14.
	Isaac and Rebekah	Gen., ch. 24.
Thursday, December 26	Appetite and Greed	Gen. 25 : 27-34.
	Jacob Deceives His Father	Gen. 27 : 18-29.
Friday, December 27	Jacob Fleeing from His Angry Brother	Gen. 28 : 10-22.
	Jacob Wins Esau	Gen. 33 : 1-11.
Saturday, December 28	Joseph Sold by His Brothers	Gen. 37 : 18-28.
	Joseph Made Ruler of Egypt	Gen. 41 : 33-44.
Sunday, December 29	Joseph Forgives His Brothers	Gen. 45 : 1-15.
	Joseph Cares for His Kindred	Gen. 47 : 1-12; or
	The Birth of Jesus	Luke 2 : 8-20.

THE LESSONS OF THE QUARTER

Number	Title	Where Found
I.	Abram Leaving Home	Gen. 12 : 1-9.
II.	Abram Helping Lot	Gen. 13 : 5-11; 14 : 14-16.
III.	Abraham Giving Isaac to God	Gen. 22 : 1-14.
IV.	Isaac and Rebekah	Gen., ch. 24.
V.	Appetite and Greed (World's Temperance Sunday)	Gen. 25 : 27-34.
VI.	Jacob Deceives His Father	Gen. 27 : 18-29.
VII.	Jacob Fleeing from His Angry Brother	Gen. 28 : 10-22.
VIII.	Jacob Wins Esau	Gen. 33 : 1-11.
IX.	Joseph Sold by His Brothers	Gen. 37 : 18-28.
X.	Joseph Made Ruler of Egypt	Gen. 41 : 33-44.
XI.	Joseph Forgives His Brothers	Gen. 45 : 1-15.
XII.	The Birth of Jesus (Christmas Lesson)	Luke 2 : 8-20.
	Or, Joseph Cares for His Kindred (Alternate Lesson)	Gen. 47 : 1-12.

WHAT IS FAITH?

There is no definition of faith in the Bible. But there is a description of it in Heb. 11 : 1, "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." What does this mean? It means, first, that faith deals with "things hoped for," that is, with the future; and with "things not seen," that is, the unseen. It means, second, that faith deals with the future in such a way as to be the assurance of it, that is, faith makes the believer as sure of the future as if it were now here. And it means that faith deals with the unseen in such a way as to be the conviction of it, that is, faith brings home to the believer the reality of things that he cannot see. Now let us discover how these qualities of faith were present or lacking in the men about whom we have been studying this quarter.

FAITH OR NO FAITH—VICTORY OR DEFEAT

Lesson I. "Abram Leaving Home." Abram left home for three things in the future, three things which he could not see. He left home because God promised him that he should have a son, and that through that son he should be the forefather of a great nation. That was all in the future, and some of it very far in the future. He left home because God promised to bless all the nations of the earth in Abram and his descendants. That was also in the future and very far in the future. He left home because God promised him that his descendants should possess the land of Canaan. That was also in the future. Abram left home because he was sure of the future and convinced of the unseen.

Lesson II. "Abram Helping Lot." Abram was now in the land of Canaan, but he did not own a foot of it. He was there as "a sojourner," a temporary visitor, living in tents, and moving from place to place—a nomad sheik. Although the land was promised to him, Abram let Lot choose the best part of the land to settle in, trusting God to keep his promise about the land—in the future.

Lesson III. "Abraham Giving Isaac to God." God had given Isaac to Abraham. Here was a partial fulfillment of the promise which Abraham could see, his son, without whom Abraham could have no descendants in whom all the nations of the world should be blessed. And yet Abraham was willing to give Isaac back to God, trusting that God would keep his promise somehow, in the future.

Lesson IV. "Isaac and Rebekah." Here we have the aged Abraham's faith that the God who had promised such a great future for Isaac would provide a wife for him from Abraham's kinsfolk back in Haran. Gen. 24 : 7. We have Eliezer's faith that God would direct him in finding the wife for Isaac whom God had chosen. Vs. 12-14. The whole romance of Isaac and Rebekah is a romance of faith.

Lesson V. "Appetite and Greed." Esau had no faith. The advantages and blessings of the birthright were all in the future, all unseen advantages and blessings. Particularly the great blessing of being an "heir of the promise" was a spiritual and therefore an unseen blessing. Esau was all for the present and the eatable. If we trade our futures, the spiritual blessings of peace with God, and the chance to do his will, to satisfy our greed or appetite, we lose as Esau did.

Lesson VI. "Jacob Deceives His Father." The miserable consequences of a lack of faith are seen in this unhappy family. Isaac tried to force the future out of God's hands by bestowing the birthright blessing on Esau. Rebekah and Jacob distrusted God's promise that Jacob should be "the heir of the promise," and they practiced the worst kind of deceit to make God's promise come true.

Lesson VII. "Jacob Fleeing from His Angry Brother." Isaac had to yield to God's plan. Rebekah lost her favorite son. Jacob had to leave home in disgrace. At Bethel, Jacob began to learn that God was to be trusted.

Lesson VIII. "Jacob Wins Esau." Jacob was slow to learn the lesson of faith in the future and the unseen. He learned that lesson fully when he wrestled with the angel on the banks of the Jabbok, and by faith and prayer prevailed with God.

Lesson IX. "Joseph Sold by His Brothers." Joseph's faith in the dreams of high destiny which God sent him made his brothers jealous. Joseph's brothers had no faith in his future. They sold him as a slave in Egypt. In spite of all appearances, Joseph was right and his brothers wrong—Joseph's future was in the hands of the unseen God.

Lesson X. "Joseph Made Ruler of Egypt." Neither the hard treatment he had received at the hands of his brothers, nor the unjust charge on which he was thrown into an Egyptian prison, nor the forgetfulness of the chief butler made Joseph lose his faith in God. Sold away from home as a slave, thirteen years a slave and two or three years of the thirteen spent in prison, and yet Joseph did not lose faith in the future or the unseen God! That faith was justified when Joseph was made ruler of Egypt.

Lesson XI. "Joseph Forgives His Brothers." Joseph's spirit of faith in the workings of an unseen Providence is best shown in what he said to his brothers, "And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." That is faith.

Lesson XII. "The Birth of Jesus." The faith of two thousand years was justified when Christ, the Saviour, was born. For two thousand years faith looked forward to something yet to come. The heroes of faith are some of them, a very few of them, named in Heb., ch. 11. All of them "received not the promise." It was still a promise to them—future, unseen. The promise became present, seen, when Christ was born in Bethlehem. Without those to whom Christ became present and seen, as the fulfillment of God's promises, these old-time saints are imperfect—their hope was deferred, their faith was in the future and unseen.

CHRISTIAN FAITH—FAITH IN CHRIST

Christ has come. The promise of God became present and seen. But Christ is not physically present with us as he was with his disciples. We cannot see him. And much of what he promises is as yet in the future and all unseen. "In my Father's house are many mansions"—that is in the future for us, and unseen. The best description of Christian faith is this: Christian faith is committing oneself entirely and forever to Christ. It is committing oneself for the present, for the unknown future, entirely and without reserve into the hands of Christ "whom not having seen ye love."

ORDERS OF SERVICE FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 1918[1]

DISTRIBUTION of hymnals and class records.

DOORS CLOSED.

OPENING SERVICE No. 1

May be used from October 6 to November 10

SUPERINTENDENT.—Make a joyful noise unto God, all the earth.[2]

BOYS.—Sing forth the glory of his name: make his praise glorious.

GIRLS.—Say unto God, How terrible are thy works!

SCHOOL.—Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

SUPERINTENDENT.—All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee.

ALL.—They shall sing to thy name.

HYMN.—"Alleluia," No. 16.

SENTENCE PRAYERS.—Psalm 51 : 10-12, 15.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN UNISON.

SCHOOL SEATED.

DOORS OPENED.—Music.

GOD'S CALL

HYMN.—"Alleluia," No. 134.

SUPERINTENDENT.—Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.

TEACHERS.—And thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

BOYS.—And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart.

GIRLS.—And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

SUPERINTENDENT.—And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes.

SCHOOL.—And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

SUPERINTENDENT.—And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee, great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not.

SCHOOL.—And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and cisterns hewn out, which thou hewedst not, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou plantedst not, and thou shalt eat and be full.

ALL.—Then beware lest thou forget Jehovah, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

MEMORY DRILL.—The Beatitudes.

SCRIPTURE LESSON.—Read by an associate superintendent or another officer or teacher.

HYMN.—"America," or some other patriotic hymn. (All rise as chord is given.)

ATTENDANCE MARKED AND OFFERING RECEIVED.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REMARKS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LESSON PERIOD.

CLOSING

LESSON HYMN.—(Played softly before announcement.)

REPORT OF SECRETARY.

CLOSING HYMN.—"Alleluia," No. 124.

BENEDICTION.

OPENING SERVICE, No. 2

May be used from November 17 to December 29

MUSIC.—School rises.

HYMN.—"Alleluia," No. 110.

OPENING SENTENCES.—Psalm 92 : 1-4 read by superintendent and school in alternation.

PRAYER.

SCHOOL SEATED.

DOORS OPENED.

FAITH'S VICTORIES

HYMN.—"Alleluia," No. 201.

SUPERINTENDENT.—By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

BOYS.—By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

GIRLS.—For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

TEACHERS.—By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.

SUPERINTENDENT.—Even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

SCHOOL.—By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.

SUPERINTENDENT.—By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

SCHOOL.—By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

SUPERINTENDENT.—Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

ALL.—Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

HYMN.—"Alleluia," No. 192.

PRAYER.

BIBLE DRILL.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REMARKS.

ATTENDANCE MARKED AND OFFERING RECEIVED.

SCRIPTURE LESSON.

LESSON PERIOD.

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[1] Extra copies of these Orders of Service will be furnished at 50 cents a hundred.

[2] Scripture selections from the American Standard Bible. Copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

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